



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: DISPARITIES AT GOVERNANCE AND HOUSEHOLD LEVELS

Maneesha Pandey

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Hindu College, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007

Abstract: There is a gap in womens' empowerment in words and what the numbers portray in reality, though the women have been provided with the constitutional and legal rights. They are participating in decision making at different tiers of governance, joining different services along with the Armed forces. But women face discrimination in every sphere of life and violence at the family and societal levels. Their societal role and responsibilities at the household does not need any recognition. But when one sees the data from other sources with regard to womens' empowerment and their role in decision-making, one experiences' that their empowerment is lowered with different factors like lack of access to education and health service, societal mindset, patriarchal societal system, dominance of men folk at every stage of decision-making in house and outside the house. The dominance of men folk and societal mindset that women are inferior to men is so deep-rooted that women independently cannot even take decisions about their own health, movements' and are even under-paid when they are employed in any economic services.

Index Terms - Women Empowerment, Discrimination, Employment, Economic services, Governance, Legal Rights

I. INTRODUCTION

“Unnatural selection”, a fascinating story weaved by Mara Hvistendahl explores the possible reasons for the shift in gender-skewed population and its contribution to retrogressive human evolution (Swinarski, 2019). Science has degraded women much below in social ranking throughout the world and ironically social scientists' talk about (Ministry of women and child development, 2021). There has been exploitation and discrimination of women irrespective of class, creed and rural-urban divide. In Indian society due to its patriarchal nature, the evil practices against women are varied ranging from physical and mental violence, domestic violence, female infanticide, dowry; henceforth, restricting their access to education and health facilities, etc. Surprisingly, the empowerment of women was emphasized in ancient, medieval as well as in the 21st century as there has been suppression of women in different societies throughout past eras. Some may even state that the situation of women in India is paradoxical as, on one hand, they are worshipped as goddesses, and on the other hand, there are instances where women are burnt for dowry. In this diversified societal set-ups, women face physical, emotional and mental atrocities that to a great extent impede the development of women.

There have been constant and concrete steps taken in empowering women by providing constitutional and legal rights along with policy measures responsive to women. It has been valued that empowering women politically, socially and economically will speed-up the wheel of all-round national development. The status of the women has ongoing constant change and in independent India women have held dignified and important positions like that of the President of India, Prime Minister, Governors, Ministers, Judges and in the All India Services and Indian Foreign Service. To protect the interest of women and implement women-specific schemes and programmes, at the national level there is Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) with the vision and mission of “empowered women living with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination...promoting social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them to realize their human rights and develop to their full potential” (Ministry of women and child development, 2021). At the State level there is a Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) in each State and Union Territory.

There are many schemes and policies in place that empower women by providing affordable education, access to health services, access to assets, access to credit, and reservation of seats in Parliament, State Legislative Assemblies and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). One such womens' empowerment initiative was taken by the Union Government in 2005-06, with the introduction and adoption of Gender Budgeting (GB). Gender Budgeting is a powerful tool that empower women to have access to the fruits of development and to ensure the government's gender empowerment commitment to be reflected in the government budget. The rationale for gender budgeting arises from recognition of the fact that national budgets impact men and women differently through the pattern of resource allocation. Women, constitute 48% of India's population, but they lag behind men on many social indicators like health, education, social, and economic opportunities, etc. Hence, they deserve special attention due to their vulnerability and lack of access to resources and rights. The way government budgets allocate resources, it has the potential

to transform these gender inequalities in equalities. In view of this, Gender Budgeting, as a tool for achieving gender mainstreaming, has been propagated. Many States like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have adopted Gender Budgeting (Ratho, 2020). Ironically, the performance of 70 Union ministries and departments for Gender Budgeting for the year 2020-21 shows that out of the 70 ministries/departments, only 57 ministries/departments have formed gender budget cells. But of these 53 ministries/departments, only 34 ministries/departments have reported allocations in the Gender Budget Statement (GBS), 2020–21. On the other hand, more than half of the total number of ministries/departments did not comply with the directions of the Union Finance ministry regarding the reporting of information. These include Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Posts, Department of Telecommunication, Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (Mehta, 2020). This reflects the low degree of solemnity of the different ministries and departments of the Government in empowering women in different spheres.

The present paper is about the actual depiction of women's empowerment by representation and decision-making in the three-tier of governance at the level of Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Panchayati Raj Institutions and the participation of women along with men in decision-making at the household level by interpreting the data of the *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4)*, 2015-16. "The data and information collected through NFHS-4 are intended to assist policymakers...besides providing evidence on the effectiveness of ongoing programmes" (The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4, 2017).

II. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT THE GOVERNANCE LEVEL

The representation of women in Central Council of Ministers (CCMs) in the Lok Sabha for different years from 2009 to 2020 shows a fluctuating and low participation. In 2009, the percentage representation of women in CCMs was only 8%. Thereafter, in 2011 and 2012 the percentage representation has marginally increased to 10%, in 2013 and 2014 it has increased to 15% and was 17% in 2015. In the following three years from 2016 to 2018, the percentage representation of women in CCMs had lowered to 12% and it further lowered to 10% in 2019, and in the year 2020 the percentage representation of women in CCMs is at the single digit of 9% (Table 1). The women's participation in CCMs is to a great extent corroborated by the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 which mentions that "...some of the most significant declines took place in large countries, which have a much larger weight in population-weighted averages. For instance, among the countries where the share of women ministers declined the most is India" The Global Gender Gap Report (2021).

Table 1: Representation of Women in the Central Council of Ministers

Year	Number of Ministers			Number of Women Ministers			% Women in Central Council of Ministers
	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	
2009	40	38	0	3	4	0	8.97
2011	32	44	0	2	6	0	10.53
2012	31	43	0	2	6	0	10.81
2013	31	47	0	3	9	0	15.38
2014	23	22	0	6	1	0	15.56
2015	23	22	0	6	2	0	17.78
2016	26	49	0	5	4	0	12.00
2017	27	48	0	6	3	0	12.00
2018	25	49	0	6	3	0	12.16
2019	24	33	0	3	3	0	10.53
2020	22	32	0	2	3	0	9.26

Source: Women and Men in India 2020. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). Page 141.

There was no representation of women from 13 States and UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry and Sikkim in the 17th Lok Sabha. In Meghalaya and Tripura there was 50% representation of women in the 17th Lok Sabha, the only Lok Sabha seat of Chandigarh was represented by a woman and at the All India level women represented at 78 seats out of the total 542 seats in the 17th Lok Sabha with participation percentage of only 14% (Table 2).

Table 2: State-wise Women participation in 17th Lok Sabha

State/UTs	Women MPs	Total Seats	% Women
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0	1	0
Andhra Pradesh	4	25	16
Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	0
Assam	1	14	7
Bihar	3	40	8
Chandigarh	1	1	100
Chhattisgarh	3	11	27
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0	1	0
Daman & Diu	0	1	0
Delhi	1	7	14
Goa	0	2	0
Gujarat	6	26	23
Haryana	1	10	10
Himachal Pradesh	0	4	0
Jammu & Kashmir	0	6	0
Jharkhand	2	14	14
Karnataka	2	28	7
Kerala	1	20	5
Lakshadweep	0	1	0
Madhya Pradesh	4	29	14
Maharashtra	8	48	17
Manipur	0	2	0
Meghalaya	1	2	50
Mizoram	0	1	0
Nagaland	0	1	0
Odisha	7	21	33
Puducherry	0	1	0
Punjab	2	13	15
Rajasthan	3	25	12
Sikkim	0	1	0
Tamil Nadu	3	39	8
Telangana	1	17	6
Tripura	1	2	50
Uttar Pradesh	11	80	14
Uttarakhand	1	5	20
West Bengal	11	42	26
All India	78	542	14

Source: Women and Men in India 2020. MOSPI. Page 145.

The scenario of women participation in State Assemblies is also in line of the 17th Lok Sabha. Only in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Puducherry, Rajasthan and West Bengal the percentage of women representation in State Assemblies exceeded 10%. In Mizoram and Puducherry these percentages were 26% and 32% respectively. In all the other States and Union Territories, the percentage of women representation in State Assemblies was less than 10%, and even at the All India level this percentage representation was only 10% (Table 3).

Table 3: State-wise participation of women in State Assemblies

States	Year of Assembly election	Male	Female	% Women	Total
Andhra Pradesh	2019	161	14	8	175
Arunachal Pradesh	2019	57	3	5	60
Assam	2016	118	8	6	126
Bihar	2015	209	34	14	243
Chhattisgarh	2018	77	13	14	90
Delhi	2020	62	8	11	70
Goa	2017	38	2	5	40
Gujarat	2017	160	22	12	182
Haryana	2019	81	9	10	90
Himachal Pradesh	2017	65	3	4	68
Jammu and Kashmir	2014	85	2	2	87
Jharkhand	2019	71	10	12	81
Karnataka	2018	216	7	3	223
Kerala	2016	132	8	6	140
Madhya Pradesh	2018	209	21	9	230
Maharashtra	2019	264	24	8	288
Manipur	2017	58	2	3	60
Meghalaya	2018	56	3	5	59
Mizoram	2018	40	14	26	54
Nagaland	2018	59	0	0	59
Odisha	2019	133	13	9	146
Punjab	2017	111	6	5	117
Puducherry	2016	30	14	32	44
Rajasthan	2018	176	24	12	200
Sikkim	2019	29	3	9	32
Tamil Nadu	2016	218	16	7	234
Telangana	2018	113	6	5	119
Tripura	2018	57	3	5	60
Uttar Pradesh	2017	361	42	10	403
Uttarakhand	2017	66	4	6	70
West Bengal	2016	255	39	13	294
Total		3767	377	10	4144

Source: Women and Men in India 2020. MOSPI. Page 146.

The participation of women in PRIs is substantially encouraging as only in Goa and Odisha, the percentage representation of women in PRIs was less than 33% and in all the other States and Union Territories the percentage representation of women in PRIs was higher than 33%. In Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Daman & Diu, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal the percentage of women representation in PRIs was 50% and above. The All India percentage for representation of women in PRIs was near about fifty percent as this percentage was 44% at the national level (Table 4).

Table 4: Status of representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

States/UTs	No of Panchayats			Elected Representatives		
	District Level	Intermediate Level	Village Level	Total	Total Women	Women (in Percent)
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	3	9	70	858	302	35.20
Andhra Pradesh	13	660	12918	156050	78025	50.00
Arunachal Pradesh	22	177	1785	9383	3658	38.99
Assam	26	191	2201	26820	13410	50.00
Bihar	38	534	8386	127391	57887	45.44
Chandigarh	1	1	1	169	58	34.32
Chhattisgarh	27	146	10978	170285	93287	54.78
Dadra Nagar Haveli	1	N.A	20	136	47	34.56
Daman & Diu	2	N.A	15	172	92	53.49
Goa	2	N.A	191	1564	516	32.99
Gujarat	33	248	14292	144016	71988	49.99
Haryana	21	126	6197	70035	29499	42.12
Himachal Pradesh	12	78	3226	28723	14398	50.13
Jammu and Kashmir	22	306	4482	33847	11169	33.00
Jharkhand	24	263	4370	60782	30757	50.60
Karnataka	30	176	6021	104967	50892	48.48
Kerala	14	152	941	18372	9630	52.42
Lakshadweep	1	N.A	10	110	41	37.27
Madhya Pradesh	51	313	22817	392981	196490	50.00
Maharashtra	34	351	27870	240122	121490	50.60
Manipur	6	N.A	161	1723	868	50.38
Odisha	30	314	6798	3502	828	23.64
Puducherry	N.A	10	98	NA	NA	
Punjab	22	147	13279	97180	32393	33.33
Rajasthan	33	295	9892	124854	70527	56.49
Sikkim	4	N.A	185	1096	548	50.00
Tamil Nadu	31	385	12523	117599	39975	33.99
Telangana	9	438	13057	103468	51735	50.00
Tripura	8	35	591	6646	3006	45.23
Uttar Pradesh	75	822	58791	826458	272733	33.00
Uttarakhand	13	95	7762	64606	35957	55.66
West Bengal	22	342	3340	59402	30157	50.77
Total	630	6614	253268	3100804	1375914	44.37

Source: Women and Men in India 2020. MOSPI. Page 148.

The economic decision-making by holding managerial positions in listed companies for women depicts a gloomy picture as in 2017-18 there were no women at managerial positions per 1000 persons engaged in the listed companies in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Daman & Diu. Whereas, there were women at managerial positions in the listed companies in these States and Union Territory during 2015-16 and 2016-17. In Assam, Odisha, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Puducherry number of women at managerial positions have consecutively increased for the three years of 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (Table 5).

Table 5: State/UT wise Proportion of Women per 1000 Person Engaged in Managerial Position in Listed Companies

State/UT	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Andhra Pradesh	158	154	122
Assam	183	208	214
Bihar	172	234	0
Chhattisgarh	159	169	0
Goa	138	141	86
Gujarat	169	174	86
Haryana	166	166	73
Himachal Pradesh	152	170	0
Jammu and Kashmir	143	91	0
Jharkhand	147	143	0
Karnataka	155	164	71
Kerala	141	175	0
Madhya Pradesh	172	165	82
Maharashtra	174	174	90
Meghalaya	154	167	0
Nagaland	-	273	0
Odisha	125	135	158
Punjab	166	176	101
Rajasthan	166	174	61
Tamil Nadu	154	157	105
Telangana	169	171	113
Uttar Pradesh	157	171	84
Uttarakhand	156	165	0
West Bengal	194	196	70
Chandigarh	172	191	667
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	154	177	222
Daman and Diu	145	172	0
Delhi	181	185	125
Puducherry	278	318	600
All India (Total)	173	177	90

Note: A total of 6063 Listed Companies have filed MGT-7 for the F.Y. 2015-16 which had a total of 44841 KMPs, of these in case of 7261 KMPs Gender field was not filed and hence the proportion is based on the remaining 37580 KMPs. Source: Women and Men in India 2020. MOSPI. Page 149.

III. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT MANAGERIAL LEVEL: DECISION MAKING BY WOMEN AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

The participation of women in decision-making at the household level along with men can be well evaluated by the data of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) for 2015-16. The NFHS data for currently married women who were employed in the past 12 months shows that at the All India level only 30% of the women were employed and of these employed women only 80% of the women were earning cash. But the percentage of earning cash by employed women in many States and UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal was higher than 90%. In the past 12 months, the figure for men shows that at the All India level 97% of the men were employed and 91% of the employed men were earning cash. This data shows that the women were comparatively less employed than men and even earning of cash by women was lower than the men (Table 6).

Table 6: Percentage of currently married women and men of age 15-49 who were employed in the 12 months preceding the survey and the percentage of those who were earning cash

State/Union Territory	Currently married women		Currently married men	
	Percentage employed in the past 12 months	Among those employed in the past 12 months, percentage earning cash	Percentage employed in the past 12 months	Among those employed in the past 12 months, percentage earning cash
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	17.8	100	97.2	97.9
Andhra Pradesh	45.7	93.3	98.9	99.1
Arunachal Pradesh	36.6	48.7	92.3	79.5
Assam	16.7	90.7	98.9	95
Bihar	20.6	61.7	93.8	89.4
Chandigarh	35.8	(97.0)	99.1	100
Chhattisgarh	48.2	81.9	98.7	95
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	28.1	(55.0)	94.4	100
Daman & Diu	23.5	(61.4)	99.7	98.7
Delhi	19.6	98	96.6	99.6
Goa	23.9	91.1	98.7	100
Gujarat	36	79.5	97.6	96.9
Haryana	21.4	80.5	96.9	92.6
Himachal Pradesh	31.9	54.6	99	97.2
Jammu & Kashmir	15.9	63.9	96.9	95.3
Jharkhand	32.3	75.7	96.9	90.1
Karnataka	37.6	81.8	97.4	92.8
Kerala	21.9	97.4	98	99.9
Lakshadweep	24.2	(100.0)	91	100
Madhya Pradesh	41.8	73	97.7	91.1
Maharashtra	37.2	77	98.9	91.5
Manipur	54.4	79	98	93.1
Meghalaya	46.4	82.4	98.7	95.2
Mizoram	49.1	60.9	97	87.3
Nagaland	35.8	62.9	97.3	81
Odisha	26.3	79	97.3	95.6
Puducherry	23.8	91.3	98.4	55.3
Punjab	18.1	95.9	99.2	95.8
Rajasthan	30.8	63	95.6	94.3
Sikkim	22.1	88.1	95.9	97.8
Tamil Nadu	33.5	93.2	97.6	63.9
Telangana	49.5	95.5	98.1	96.4
Tripura	33.1	79.8	99.4	100
Uttar Pradesh	23.4	63.8	97.2	88.8
Uttarakhand	20.3	72.8	96.7	96.6
West Bengal	23.4	94.2	98.7	96
India	30.6	80	97.5	91.1

() Based on 25-49 unweighted cases. Source: NFHS-4 Report. 2015-16. Page 520.

Table 7 shows that 82% of the currently married women reported that they alone or jointly with their husband decide how their own earnings are to be used and whereas, comparatively low 70% of the currently married women reported that they alone or jointly with their husband decide how their husband's earnings are to be used. This shows that at the household level, although women are earning but their decisions are still influenced by the men about how to utilize their own earnings. Puducherry is the only exception where a high percentage (73%) of the currently married women alone or jointly with their

husband decides how their husband's earnings are to be used. Whereas, only 67% of the currently married women alone or jointly with their husband decide how their own earnings are to be used. There is not much variation between the perception of married women and men when they reported about taking decision alone or jointly over the wife's earning. In most instances, regarding use of their wife's earnings, men are reported to take decision alone or seldom in consultation with their wives.

Karnataka and Daman and Diu are the only exception where 57% and 51% of the currently married women reported that they earn more than their husband and the All India figure is 43% women who earn more or about the same as their husband. Although, the All India figure for the same for currently married men is 48%, but more than 50% of the currently married men in 13 states of Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh reported that their wife earns more or about the same as them (Table 7).

Table 7: Percentage of currently married women and men of age 15-49 by person who decides how women's and men's cash earnings are used and by the relative magnitude of women's cash earnings, compared with their husband's cash earnings

States/UTs	Percentage of currently married women who report that they:			Percentage of currently married men who report that:		
	Alone or jointly with their husband decide how their own earnings are used ¹	Alone or jointly with their husband decide how their husband's earnings are used ²	Earn more or about the same as their husband ³	They alone or jointly with their wife decide how their wife's earnings are used ⁴	Their wife alone or jointly with them decides how their own earnings are used ⁵	Their wife earns more or about the same as them ⁶
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	88.4	80.4	(34.2)	(86.1)	83.8	*
Andhra Pradesh	78	67.7	40.7	93.6	68.7	36.1
Arunachal Pradesh	88.7	76.7	44.6	78.2	78.9	32.7
Assam	85.5	73.6	38.4	81.9	79.5	33.6
Bihar	83.3	62.2	33.8	81.3	72.6	45.4
Chandigarh	(96.7)	84.7	(29.4)	*	99.1	*
Chhattisgarh	85	78.3	42.3	88.3	84.9	53.1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	*	46.4	*	*	76.9	*
Daman & Diu	(72.8)	64.6	(51.7)	*	62.5	*
Delhi	76.7	66.3	44.9	(86.0)	84.4	(49.5)
Goa	94.1	80.6	41.5	(85.3)	81.1	(55.1)
Gujarat	79.3	63.2	43.5	83.4	63.3	50.8
Haryana	76.7	68.1	38.3	86.2	70.2	56.8
Himachal Pradesh	92.8	75.5	26.8	69	77.2	32.7
Jammu & Kashmir	83.1	68	26.7	72.4	63	24.2
Jharkhand	84.3	77.8	48.3	80.5	78.4	56.1
Karnataka	75.9	62.4	57.9	75.9	66	37.2
Kerala	90.8	67.5	38	80.8	55.6	33.1
Lakshadweep	(76.6)	54.3	*	*	52	*
Madhya Pradesh	79.5	71.6	43.1	84	74.4	55.8
Maharashtra	86.2	72.3	46	75.8	78.7	44.4
Manipur	90.5	82.3	26.9	86.5	75.5	23.1
Meghalaya	89.8	80.4	35.3	75.9	78.6	20
Mizoram	94.1	83.3	37.4	90.3	78.4	41.3
Nagaland	97.3	91	40.8	87.4	84.1	36.3
Odisha	81.5	72.8	39.2	78.6	70.7	38.5
Puducherry	67	73.5	(26.9)	76.5	65.5	(71.6)
Punjab	90	75.5	40.2	83.5	81.6	71.4
Rajasthan	82.1	70.3	43.6	82	77.1	62.5
Sikkim	92.2	85.6	48.6	57.2	94.3	65.7
Tamil Nadu	79.4	72.6	47.5	72.8	79.1	68.6

Telangana	74.1	70.1	40.7	85.5	68.4	51.4
Tripura	91	73.4	21.5	88	60.6	23.2
Uttar Pradesh	84.1	73	46.4	83.2	77.5	55.8
Uttarakhand	94.1	77.8	34.9	79.1	83.9	49.4
West Bengal	89.9	69.3	37.4	66.9	67.4	31.7
India	82.1	70.7	43.1	80.4	73	48.2

1 Women who are employed for cash, 2 Women whose husbands earn cash, 3 Women who earn cash and whose husbands earn cash, 4 Men whose wives are employed for cash, 5 Men who earn cash and 6 Men who earn cash and whose wives earn cash. () Based on 25-49 unweight cases. * Percentage not shown; based on fewer than 25 unweight cases. Source: NFHS-4 Report. 2015-16. Pages 527-528.

Table 8 shows that in India only 63% women usually make decisions alone or jointly with their husbands regarding their own health care, major household purchase, visit to her family or relatives and 16% women cannot take these decisions independently. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Haryana more than 20% of the women cannot take these three decisions. In Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh 15%-20% women cannot take these three decisions. It shows that in each of the 14 States and Union Territories more than 15% of the women cannot take decisions regarding their own health care, major household purchase, visit to her family or relatives. The irony is that at the All India level 5% of the husbands said that women do not have any role in taking decisions at the household level with regard to women's own health care, making major household purchase and visit to their families or relatives. In Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Tripura, and Telangana the percentage of men with such view exceeds 10% figure. In Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha, and Rajasthan around 5%-10% of the men are against the decision making by women at the household level.

Table 8: Percentage of currently married women age 15-49 who usually make decisions on three specific kinds of decisions either by themselves or jointly with their husband, and percentage of currently married men age 15-49 who say that a wife should have an equal or greater say than her husband in specific kinds of decisions.

States/UTs	Percentage of women who usually make decisions alone or jointly with her husband					Percentage of men who say that a wife should have an equal or greater say alone or jointly with her husband in:	
	Own health care	Making major household purchases	Visits to her family or relatives	All three decisions	None of the three decisions	All of the five decisions ¹	None of the five decisions ¹
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	89	87.2	87.2	82	7.4	54	3.5
Andhra Pradesh	67.5	72.1	71.8	58.9	20.1	51	6.9
Arunachal Pradesh	82.9	83.6	85.1	76.9	10.9	68.9	3.3
Assam	79.3	80.5	80.4	71	12.6	63.6	5.5
Bihar	66.1	64.2	61.2	51.8	24.8	46.9	11.3
Chandigarh	94	83	87	79.3	3.4	64.3	3.5
Chhattisgarh	78.8	79.1	79.4	65.9	9.5	69.9	3
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	70	61.2	65.3	52	21.5	66.3	13.3
Daman & Diu	70	74	73.9	60.2	13.3	27.6	1.1
Delhi	68	63.1	65.9	56.3	26.2	76.1	3.2
Goa	90.8	87.1	90.2	83.7	6.2	82.5	0.2
Gujarat	73.8	73	76.6	62	14.6	73.7	3.9
Haryana	69.8	63.1	64.1	55	23.3	59.7	4.7
Himachal Pradesh	83.7	75.3	80.5	66.7	9.2	73.4	0.8
Jammu & Kashmir	75.1	71.5	74.1	61.7	16	51.6	9
Jharkhand	80.4	79.3	79.5	71.9	13.4	68.2	3.7
Karnataka	68	71.9	73.6	60.7	19.6	49.3	7.7
Kerala	80.6	79.5	83.7	67.6	7.9	64.3	2.7
Lakshadweep	60.2	53.4	72.2	40.1	17.9	58.7	3.2

Madhya Pradesh	72.2	71.7	72.9	60.5	17.2	54.3	8.6
Maharashtra	80.2	75.5	82.7	67.6	10.7	69.6	3.4
Manipur	89.5	84.5	89.2	77	3.8	66.4	1.4
Meghalaya	83.6	83.6	86.9	77.3	8.6	70.5	5.4
Mizoram	88.8	89.8	88.6	79	4	41.9	1.9
Nagaland	94.8	93.9	95.3	90.7	2.6	62.9	0.6
Odisha	71.9	72.1	70	60.3	18.2	52.1	8.6
Puducherry	74	76	76.3	65	14.9	55.7	0.1
Punjab	84.2	74.7	81.9	69.6	9.9	63.2	1.2
Rajasthan	72.6	68.8	71	59.4	18.3	63	6.2
Sikkim	93.1	92.1	93.8	89.4	4.7	81.5	2.6
Tamil Nadu	76.1	76.1	78	68.1	16.1	50.3	4.5
Telangana	68.2	72.3	70.4	57.1	19	42.9	10.2
Tripura	84.9	84.5	87.4	77.5	8.3	51.4	10.6
Uttar Pradesh	73	71.2	69	59.6	18.3	54.7	4.4
Uttarakhand	82.2	80.5	82	72.3	10.2	71	1.2
West Bengal	81.1	80.7	81.6	70.8	10.1	64.3	1.2
India	74.5	73.4	74.6	63	16	59.2	5.3

¹Decisions about major household purchases, purchases for daily household needs, visits to the wife's family or relatives, what to do with the money the wife earns, and how many children to have. Source: NFHS-4 Report. 2015-16. Page 534.

It is not that women were not able to take decisions about their own health, major household purchases and visits to relatives, their decisions-making even with regard to access finance and movement outside the home at the household level was not of their own (Table 9). At the All India level, only 41% of the women have money that they can decide how to use and only 53% of the women have bank or savings accounts that they themselves use. In 14 States and Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana less than 40% of the women have money that they can decide how to use. In 11 States and Union Territories like Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and West Bengal less than 50% of the women have bank or savings accounts that they themselves use. In Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal more than 50% of the women were allowed to go to the market, health facilities and places outside the village/community. And in all the other States and Union Territories less than 50% of the women were allowed to go out of homes and hence it can be stated that there was no or limited movement of freedom for women (Table 9).

Table 9: Percentage of women age 15-49 who have access to money, who know of a microcredit programme and have taken a loan from a microcredit programme, and who are allowed to go to three specified places alone.

States/UTs	Women's access to money		Women's knowledge and use of microcredit programmes		Percentage allowed to go to three specified places alone ¹
	Percentage who have money that they can decide how to use	Percentage who have bank or savings account that they themselves use	Percentage who have know of a microcredit programme	Percentage who have taken a loan from a microcredit programme	
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	39.5	81.8	53.1	3.6	47.4
Andhra Pradesh	24.5	66.3	71	29.7	45.3
Arunachal Pradesh	41.4	56.6	21.8	4.2	38.3
Assam	25.2	45.4	36.6	6.4	34.9
Bihar	33.4	26.4	28.4	4.8	33.8
Chandigarh	63.4	79.6	48	2.3	64
Chhattisgarh	43.7	51.2	52.2	4.9	33.8
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	30	36.9	12.3	0	26.2
Daman & Diu	61.5	61.9	20.9	2.5	60.2

Delhi	47.6	64.5	23.5	2.3	47.5
Goa	61.7	82.8	55.7	4.4	57.9
Gujarat	52.1	48.6	38.8	2.9	42.3
Haryana	42.8	45.6	24.4	2	38.1
Himachal Pradesh	49.8	68.8	33	2.3	71.8
Jammu & Kashmir	41.7	60.3	37.6	1.3	46.7
Jharkhand	40.2	45.1	40.7	5.2	41
Karnataka	29.9	59.4	42.7	14.1	31.3
Kerala	40.1	70.6	67.1	9.8	11.9
Lakshadweep	41.5	74.4	62.2	0.4	7.8
Madhya Pradesh	35.1	37.3	32.1	4	33
Maharashtra	52.9	45.3	37	5.1	52.3
Manipur	32.4	34.8	46.2	5.5	31.3
Meghalaya	48.1	54.4	22.1	3.8	31.3
Mizoram	22.9	57.1	9.1	2	84.6
Nagaland	31.8	38.8	17.5	3	27.7
Odisha	31.1	56.2	66.6	14.2	20.3
Puducherry	38.4	68.2	47.9	21.4	49.7
Punjab	42.8	58.8	46.8	2.4	50.2
Rajasthan	46	58.2	26.4	1.6	36.6
Sikkim	49.1	63.5	42.3	5.1	85.1
Tamil Nadu	39.7	77	50.3	14.9	53.7
Telangana	23.8	59.5	60.3	22.7	44.2
Tripura	54.9	59.2	80	14.4	41.6
Uttar Pradesh	43.8	54.6	27.7	2.3	32.2
Uttarakhand	50	58.5	22.3	3.2	63.2
West Bengal	58.1	43.5	44.9	8.8	55.6
India	41.7	53	40.8	7.7	40.5

1. To the market, health facility, and places outside the village/community. Source: NFHS-4 Report. 2015-16. Pages 538-39.

IV CONCLUSION

The statistics and the analysis in the paper shows that women representation in CCMS, Lok Sabha, State Legislatives Assemblies and women holding managerial positions in the listed companies was abysmally low even when there are programmes, policies, legal and constitutional provisions in place to safeguard interests and rights of women. At the governance level, there is also a need to study how effectively women who represent in PRIs are able to take part in the decision-making at the District Level, Intermediate Level and Village Level Panchayat as there is a rural-urban divide. Women in rural areas are comparatively less educated than at urban areas due to various supply side and social constraints. There is greater probability that the decision-making by women representing at PRIs level is influenced by the men folk and the customs and traditions restrict the women in rural areas to come forward to take independent decisions; even if they are elected to any decision-making position. Society of Tribal Women for Development (STWFD, 2021) in one of its study on the PRIs, states that "...in some cases, election materials – banners, posters, and etc. are made in the name of the man rather than the woman who is the official candidate, and that the man tends to assume the role of the Pradhan or Sarpanch, attending and even chairing the meetings in place of the elected woman representative. The phenomenon of proxy representation was, thus, prevalent in many places. There were some examples of Scheduled castes (SC) and Scheduled tribes (ST) women representatives being disallowed from chairing Panchayat meetings and participate in higher-caste, male-dominated occasions and ceremonies. There were also cases where the woman Sarpanch has asserted her right to do so, despite being told to make the tea or go home."

The decision-making of the women even at the household level is independently not welcomed by men. They alone cannot take decisions about their own earnings, health, movement and household purchase as the major decisions in this regard are dominated by men and hence, there is a substantial gap in women's economic, educational, social and political empowerment in comparison to men. The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 which captures gender-based gaps among four key dimensions of Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment, also shows that India's rank was low at 140 and it was mentioned in the report that "...populous countries such as India and China perform below average contributes to reducing the global average result" (The Global Gender Gap Report 2021).

There is a need to take steps, especially in the form of institutional initiatives that protect the women empowerment rights and enhance the role of women in decision-making in the true spirit and letters as there is a low representation of women in decision-making at the national level, state level and even at the household level. At the All India level around 16% of the women cannot take decisions regarding their own health care, major household purchase and visit to their relatives. Though women represent economically and socially, their decision-making capabilities are considered incompetent and are undermined by men.

There is also a need to focus on capacity building of elected women representative, measures that change the societal mindset on capabilities of women. Regular monitoring and research studies are a need of the hour that highlights the shortcomings and obstacles in the path of decision-making by women at the governance and the household level.

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