

**A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS ON EVER-MARRIED
WOMEN FROM INDIA**

**SYNOPSIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ECONOMICS**

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SYNOPSIS

Introduction:

Women are subject to discrimination in every sphere of life, such as participation in decision-making at the household, in political systems, or in labour force participation. The well-known issue of gender inequality is rooted in almost every society from very early period. The stratification of men and women is initiated by the patriarchal system of distribution of property rights and inheritance. However, man and woman get married either voluntarily or involuntarily. Marriage as an essential social institution in India that has gone through many changes from generations. Nevertheless, family relations and societal influence on gender laws deeply impact the marriage system of any society and most of the laws and customs have been nourished with a patriarchal pattern of thinking. In this context, the present thesis concentrates on the problems of ever-married women in India, where according to the definitions of Population Division of United Nations the term *Ever-Married* implies that women or men who have been married at least once in their lifetime however their present marital status may not be married.

The subjugation and oppression of ever-women continued from the pre-independence period with the prevalence of various horrific customs and traditions. Later in the post-independence period the situation of women enhanced to a great extent. But despite several measures and reforms in post-independent India, women are still considered inferior to men. Thus, in-depth observation is required to search the causes of this deeply penetrated idea of male supremacy over females and to focus on the major problems faced by the ever-married women in India. An empowered woman enlightens the future of an economy by creating impacts on generations. So, it is necessary to first identify the domains and factors of disempowerment. To what extent spousal violence creates impact on the incidence of divorce this requires empirical investigation. Further women are neglected or averted from their parental home also since parents may have son preference attitude which is a common phenomenon in developing countries. The issue of child marriage pops up from here. However, whether the incidence of child marriage has any relation with son preference or not needs to be examined.

The present dissertation aims to analyze the well-known yet less investigated, socio-economic problems, that are, *disempowerment, violence, and early marriage*, faced by the *ever-married* women from a developing country like India.

Disempowerment: It is defined as a situation of exchange of power in such a manner that women lose control over their own lives and more controlled by men and it refers to the situations of denial of making choices, areas where lack of resources are observed, and finally the magnitude of the failure of desired achievements or in gross terms, we can define it as measuring of 'Disempowerment'.

Spousal/Domestic Violence: Domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IVF) refers to conscious menacing, physical and sexual assault, emotional and verbal abuse particularly on women by an intimate partner or spouse or any other close relationship or member of her spousal home to establish power or control over the abused.

Child Marriage: The marriage of girls below the legal age of marriage that is 18 years is known as child marriage.

Data:

We have used NFHS-4 (National Family Health Survey, 2015-16) data for chapters 3, 4, and 5, while DLHS-4 data (District Level Household Survey, 2012-13) set is used for chapter 6 for the issue of child marriage.

Methodology:

The empirical analyses of the chapters are established by using modern econometric techniques.

In chapter 3, we use multilevel multivariate logistic regression used for identifying factors responsible for disempowerment of women. Next, Fairlie-Decomposition Technique is adopted for scrutinizing the difference in disempowerment in two different demographic settings.

In chapter 4 a distinguished variety of graphical representation, D-curve analysis is applied to check the variation of disempowerment over time.

Besides empirical modeling, a theoretical model is also developed in chapter 5 and the empirical section uses a quantile regression technique clustered at the state level to identify the sensitivity to spousal violence and we estimate the probability of divorce using data on ever-married women using the IV-probit model with clustered standard error.

In chapter 6 structural equation modeling techniques with path analyses along with multilevel IVprobit regression model is used to assess the issue of child marriage.

Organisation of Chapters:

The dissertation is segregated into the following chapters:

Chapter 2 titled **Review of Literature** represents a detailed discussion of existing literature on the socio-economic problems faced by the ever-married women.

Chapter 3 is entitled "**Disempowerment of women: The Indian Story**" represents the issue of disempowerment of ever-married women through an empirical investigation of the factors influencing the problem.

Chapter 4 named "**Women Disempowerment at Sub-National Level: A Socio-Economic Analysis**" is organized to investigate the extent and magnitude of disempowerment of ever-married women in India.

Chapter 5 is entitled "**A Study on Spousal violence and Divorce in Indian Families**" is designed to search the association between empowerment and spousal violence faced by the ever-married women in India.

Chapter 6 is titled: "**Child Marriage: Some facts from selected Indian States**" represent the issue of child marriage of girls in India while focusing on the son preference attitude of parents.

Finally, chapter 7 concludes the dissertation.

Brief summary of the chapters:

Summary of Chapter 2: *The Literature Review*

Objective: The chapter provides a detailed review of existing literature on women's disempowerment, spousal abuse, and girl child marriage.

Findings: The literature on empowerment focuses on the exploration of factors that are responsible for the causation of empowerment of women or the factors which restrict the autonomy of women. The literature based on the Indian context explains how far the lack of autonomy among women affects the welfare of the women as well as the development of society. Besides, among the other societal factors, the effect of region, religion, and caste factors on women's autonomy are examined in India. Next, the literature on the issue of spousal violence against women sheds light on one of the major threats that ever-married women have been facing from very early times. The literature focused on the consequences of domestic violence or intimate partner violence on women in deteriorating health and efficiency. Both physical and cognitive impairment from this phenomenon is discussed by

many researchers. Further, the articles concentrate on the exploration of factors that are responsible for IPV on women. Both empirical and theoretical studies on spousal violence are focused on discovering the major factors that are responsible for the perpetuation of spousal violence on women. The literature on child marriage is vast and interesting findings are observed on this prevailing age-old custom of the marriage of under 18 girls across the whole world. The consequences on the health of young girls, due to early marriage, are examined by the researchers. The studies explored the trends and prevalence of child marriage in India through the exploration of regions, districts, and states of India. Besides India, the global prevalence of this evil incidence is also examined by many researchers.

Summary of Chapter 3: *Disempowerment of women: The Indian Story*

Objective: The existence of long-standing tradition of deprivation, social exclusion, and obvious disempowerment is observed among ever-married women in different societies. The present chapter focuses on measuring the disempowerment of women in India and explores the factors influencing it at the state level using National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) data. The extension of the chapter shows an empirical model of decomposition designed to focus on detecting the difference of disempowerment in two neighboring states.

Methodology: For measuring disempowerment a wide range of indicator variables are clubbed to form specific dimensions using the Alkire et.al (2013) methodology. For exploration of factors, multilevel logistic regression is applied with an inter-state variation. To analyze the stark difference in the disempowerment level of women in two neighboring states of India Punjab and Haryana, Fairlie non-liner decomposition method is applied.

Findings: It is observed that women from rural areas with less education and if unemployed, with longer marriage duration and with lesser asset holding are more disempowered. Further, it is found that women from the Muslim religion and Younger women in a joint family with children have lesser autonomy. Next, if the women have observed parental violence in childhood are more disempowered. The chapter has found that Shikh dominated Punjab has reflected more autonomy for women rather than Haryana.

Contribution to literature: Here we tried to explore the extent of disempowerment across states using an econometric model that catches the inter-state variation and we apply a decomposition strategy to check the impact of religion on the difference in disempowerment for two seemingly equal and neighboring states.

Conclusion: The chapter stressed the fact that women must believe in their strength and focus on increasing self-esteem. Government policies should focus on increasing the employability of women through skill enhancement training that would make them either job-market ready or self-employed.

Summary of Chapter 4: *Women Disempowerment at Sub-National Level: A Socio-Economic Analysis*

Objective: Assessment of the change in disempowerment of women overtime is necessary for appropriate policy framing. The present chapter compares the change in the disempowerment of women of India from 2005-06 to 2015-16 Using NFHS-3 and NFHS-4 data sets using a comprehensive multidimensional approach.

Methodology: The disempowerment index is constructed using various dimensions and indicators with the Chakravarty and Ambrosio (2006) technology of measuring social deprivation and for graphical comparison of disempowerment of women in various states of India over time, we have used the D-Curve (deprivation distribution profile) methodology.

Findings: It is observed that Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat, and Rajasthan have shown lesser disempowerment of women among the states included in the study while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and in Karnataka recorded more disempowerment in 2015-16. The descriptive findings reflect the fact that women who are afraid of husband and who don't have a mobile phone are more disempowered and further women who supported the incidence of wife-beating have reported more disempowerment. Next, from the D-curve methodology it can not be inferred that disempowerment has decreased over time in India.

Contribution to Literature: Here we tried to compare the disempowerment level of women across states of India for two different periods using a unique D-curve methodology.

Conclusion: The removal of women's disempowerment from India needs women to be aware of their self-esteem, they should understand their worth and they must always stand beside another woman to remove any kind of gender inequality.

Summary of Chapter 5: *A Study on Spousal violence and Divorce in Indian Families*

Objective: The married women face various forms of spousal abuse or intimate partner violence in the patriarchal society like India. This chapter seeks to explore the following: 1. It theoretically develops a model to identify the relationship between women empowerment and spousal violence (SV) 2. Using NFHS-4 data, validate the result of the theoretical analysis in the context of Indian married women in the age group of 15-49 years. 3. How spousal violence and other controls affect the incidence of divorce.

Methods: The theoretical model uses a Nash bargaining game. To validate this model, we construct an index of women empowerment and index on SV for the respondents using the following dimensions: physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence and sexual violence. Next, quantile regression model with clustered-standard-error finds the impact of women empowerment on SV among presently married women. Finally, the probability of divorce among the ever married women and its association with intimate partner violence is estimated using an IV-probit model with clustered-standard-error.

Results: We observe that higher women empowerment reduces the extent of SV both theoretically and empirically. The extent of spousal violence is high in a poor family with alcoholic husband, large number of children, employed wife and husband more educated than wife. The probability of divorce increases with the extent of spousal violence, and age of women and in Muslim families.

Contribution to Literature: Here we applied a two-stage bargaining model and find that an increase in empowerment can reduce spousal violence. Next, we validate this finding empirically and we have applied an econometric model where we estimate the probability of divorce of ever-married women while taking spousal violence as an endogenous factor.

Conclusion: The results indicate better implementation of policies towards women empowerment and education, family planning measures among poor and a system of rescue, rehabilitation and legal help to the battered women.

Summary of Chapter 6: *Child Marriage: Some facts from selected Indian States*

Objective: It is observed from facts and studies that preferring sons or son dominance might have an implication with the early marriage of daughters, yet the idea has not been tested so far. Thus, the present chapter is dedicated to searching the link of child marriage with son dominance in the family where son dominance is conceptualized by more number of sons to daughter in the family.

Methodology: The empirical investigation is done by using the DLHS-4 data set. The empirical model is built where the sex of the firstborn child is used as an instrument for son dominance in the family. Then instrumental variable probit, as well as multilevel probit regression, is done to check the influence of son dominance attitude of the family on the incidence of child marriage of daughters with other socio-economic controls.

Findings: It is observed that the incidence of child marriage decreases significantly when the daughter is from a son-dominant family. Further, if the parents have high age gap and if the family has a high level of asset endowment then the incidence of child marriage decreases. The incidence is

higher among Muslim families compared to Hindu. Further, it is found that the incidence is high among some tribes although they are from the matrilineal community.

Contribution to literature: Here, we check the issue of child marriages of daughters to marital patterns of the parents and son dominance in the families, while taking into account the interstate variation in the incidence across states of India.

Conclusion: Lastly the chapter stressed on direct cash transfer mechanism, skill enhancement programme, and school enrolment of young girls and stronger law enforcement schemes for the prevention of child marriage also need to be implemented.

Summary of Chapter 7: Conclusion and Policy Implication:

The last chapter summarizes the overall findings from the dissertation and focused on various suitable policies to combat the three threats faced by the ever-married women. Women's autonomy is crucially important for the overall development of a society. However, in a patriarchal environment, policy framing to enhance the empowerment of ever-married women is utterly difficult and critical to guarantee the success of any measure. The solution to the problem of IPV or domestic violence requires systematic strategic intervention to eradicate the traditional notion of gender stereotypes and norms apart from changes in legislation to penalize the wrongdoer or to protect the victim. Child marriage of girls, which is considered an ancient and worldwide tradition, imposes life threats to young girls' calls for social and legal framework transformation to uproot the evil practice.

Various empowerment generating programmes have been adopted by the Government of India. Programmes such as Enterprise Development programme which would help the young woman to flourish their entrepreneurial skills such as Mahila E-Haat, Mahila Shakti Kendra (2017) schemes with effective implementation among rural and asset poor women would be beneficial. Programmes such as Nari Shakti Puraskar (1999) must be framed to award the successful entrepreneurial service of a woman. To rescue the battered women a comprehensive network like "Childline" would be of great help. Another policy named The One-stop Centre Scheme of Govt of India protects the battered women with its integrated 24-hour helpline helps to protect the victim of violence. Besides this we feel that various counseling programmes with violent husbands to bring attitudinal changes in men must be organized. Small group intervention programmes would also be beneficial in bringing attitudinal changes in men, such as 'Yaari Dosti' programme (2006). For divorced women financial Schemes, such as Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana may be of help. The Girl Child Policy (2013) of Rajasthan focused on overall growth development and empowerment of a girl with declaration that of her to right to life with dignity and no discrimination.

We feel that government should arrange different skill enhancement programmes from the school level that will pave the way for self-sufficiency for the girls in the future. Educational policies and working opportunities may create a limited expansion to women's autonomy until it takes into account direct action to couple dynamics by social counseling programmes. Finally, legislative changes for the prevention of child marriage also need to be implemented.

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Supervisor's Signature:

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