WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN URBAN INDIA
A STUDY OF WORKING WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN DELHI

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*T*HERE have been significant advances for women in many parts of India in relation to health, education and employment over the past decade. However, the persistent, and in some cases, increasing incidence of violence against women; the underrepresentation of women in decision-making in all areas and at all levels; the persistence of discriminatory laws governing marriage, land, property and inheritance; and the fact that women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty, is unacceptable in this new millennium. In addition, new challenges for women's empowerment and gender equality have emerged over the past decade, such as combating HIV/AIDS, addressing trafficking in women and girls, and mobilizing the new information and communication technologies (ICT) in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. Even in areas where progress has been made, there is still much room for improvement. This study is an attempt to measure the extent to which working women professionals in the National Capital Region (NCR) Delhi, the capital of India feel that they are empowered in critical areas like educational attainment, economic opportunity, health and well-being, decision making, sexual harassment and abuse, and autonomy. The research methodology consists of preparing the empirical design for research in terms of a sample of 92 working women professionals in academics and industry in both public and private sector.

Key Words: Empowerment, Freedom, Life choices, Decision Making.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of world's poorest people are still women and girls, less than 16 percent of the world's parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence (UNDP, 2009).

Women's rights and issues have always been a subject of serious concern of academicians, intelligentsia and policy makers. From pastoral society to contemporary information and global society, the role of women has changed drastically. The role of a typical "Grihani" (house wife) who catered to all the requirements of the house holds including the rearing and upbringing of children in various sub roles of daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, mother, aunt etc. has been played quite efficiently. The continuity of changes in socio-economic and psycho-cultural aspects of human living has influenced the role of women. With the process of Industrialization, Modernization and Globalization showing its deep impact on the human society all over the world, the role and responsibilities of women has attained new definition and perspective. The women issues have received tremendous attention in the planning

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circle and in wide intellectual discussions and forums at national and global platforms. However the existing lacuna in the formulation and execution of the policies has not changed the grass root situation to a great extent. On the encouraging front, in the South Asian countries there have been relatively increasing economic participation in past one decade. Statistically the rate of literacy among women has also increased. The educational and occupational patterns have also changed and widened with women entering the domains, which till decade back was considered to be dominated by men. Further there has been encouraging rise in the percentage of the women joining service sector especially Banking and Information Technology. In the background of the gigantic transformation, the core issue, which still remains unanswered, is that of women's right and empowerment.

Many use the term empowerment without understanding what it really means. Rapport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts. Even defining the concept is subject to debate. Zimmerman (1984) has stated that asserting a single definition of empowerment may make attempts to achieve it formulaic or prescription-like, contradicting the very concept of empowerment. A literature review resulted in no clear definition of the concept, especially one that could be used in cross-disciplinary lines. Page and Czuba (1999) define empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives, a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important. According to them the core of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. Power is often related to the ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes or interests (Weber, 1946). Traditional social science emphasizes power as influence and control, often treating power as a commodity or structure divorced from human action (Lips, 1991).

According to Schuler et al. (1998), process of empowerment begins at the level of a woman's individual consciousness and becomes externalized through greater physical mobility, remunerated labor, a stronger role in the household and eventually meaningful participation in the larger community. The meaning of empowerment has been the subject of great debate and remains, at present, a poorly defined concept (Cunningham et al., 1996; Geroy et al., 1998, Dainty et al., 2002; Psoinos and Smithson, 2002). Mondros and Wilson (1994) and Russ and Millam (1995) similarly argued that the term is rarely defined clearly and is frequently used rhetorically. One possible reason for this lack of clarity is the tendency for empowerment to be attached to management programmes, for example, Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and Total Quality Management (TQM) (Dainty et al., 2002). Furthermore, the term empowerment represents a wide variety of activities, from "sham" empowerment (Rosenthal et al., 1997) to a high level of genuine involvement and devolution of power. However, as Ford and Fottler (1995) suggested, genuine empowerment is likely to include decision-making authority over job content and job context. The original meaning of empowerment has been referred to as to authorize, give power to (Tulloch, 1993). The use of the term "power" appears to be common throughout the definitions of empowerment; for example, Legge (1995) argued that empowerment should be seen in terms of a redistributive model whereby power equalization is promoted for trust and collaboration. Similarly, Conger and Kanungo (1988, p. 474) focused on power as the central point of empowerment, either to strengthen this belief or to weaken belief in personal powerlessness. Power is often redistributed by transferring control so that employees have the authority to make and implement their own decisions. The social-structural perspective of empowerment focuses on the facilitation of empowerment by leaders and on the contextual issues that impact on empowerment (Spreitzer and Doneson, 2005). Pastor (1996, p.5) defined empowerment in terms of its dynamic interaction, for example stated that it is part of a process or an evolution – an evolution that goes on whenever you have two or more people in a relationship, personally or professionally. Lee and Koh (2001) refined this description further by looking at the inter-subjective nature of the subordinate and supervisor. They suggested that empowerment is the combination of the psychological state of a subordinate, which is influenced by the empowering behaviours of supervisors. Thus, empowerment covers a broad range of initiatives linked to direct participation (Psoinos and Smithson, 2002; Wilkinson, 2002; Wall et al., 2004).

Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources – material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money – and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society, nation, and to gain 'power' (Bisnath and Elson, 1999). According to the Country Report of Government of India, Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power (Batliwala, 1994). According to Cambridge English Dictionary empowerment means "to authorize". In the context of the people they have to be authorized to have control over their lives. When applied in the context of development the particular segment of population, the poor, the women, the vulnerable, the weak, the oppressed and the discriminated have to be "empowered" to have control over their lives to better their socio-economic and political conditions. Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." For women in India, this suggests empowerment in several realms: personal, familial, economic and political.

There are some basic questions that come to the mind when we talk of empowerment:

- Can women, decide, with dignity and without any fear, their own goals and have the freedom and capability to act towards them?

- Do they have access to means of production to ensure economic independence and physical security outside the house as a precondition to freedom of movement?

- Do their opinions and desires count at the level of family, the society and the country?

- How do we provide opportunities to enhance their capabilities?

- Does she have the right to own and enjoy property?

- Does she have freedom from the drudgeries of the laborious domestic chores and meaningless social restrictions?

- Is she able to freely participate in the development and status building of the nation?

- Does she have mastery over vocational, managerial and life-saving medicinal skills?

If answer to any of these questions is in the negative, it implies that women are not completely empowered. Thus, women's empowerment needs some basic ingredients which include fearlessness (implying absence of crimes against women), freedom from drudgery of laborious domestic chores, economic earning and productivity, ability to travel and control speed, authority to take decision, sharing power and property with men and a liberalizing education that can prepare grounds for the above (Batliwala, 1995).

Status of Women in India
"Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand… woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his…It is up to men to see that they enable them to realize their full status and play their part as equal of men"

– Mahatma Gandhi

In India, since long back, women were considered as an oppressed section of the society and they were neglected for centuries. In Vedic age, the women were declared to be innately unfit for independence. Since time immemorial, they have been subject to torture, mal-treatment and all sorts of misbehavior. Western impact influenced the Indian social-system and era of social reforms began during the 19-century. The Sati tradition was eliminated, slave trade abolished, girls' education started and in the eyes of law women were provided equal status. While in pre-independence India, education among women was slow and limited to upper strata of society it tremendously increased in independent India. The first task in post-independent India was to provide a constitution to the people, which would not make any distinctions on the basis of sex. Article 15(1) of the Indian Constitution guarantees equalities

of opportunities for all citizens in matters of employment. Article 15(3) provides that the state can make any special provisions for women and children. Besides, directive principle of state policy which concern women directly and have a special bearing on their status directly and have a special bearing on their status include Article 39(a) right to an adequate means of livelihood; (d) equal pay for equal work both men and women, (e) protection of health and strength of workers – men, women, children and Article 42 provides for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. It is really important to note that though the Constitution of India is working since more than sixty years – the raising of the status of women to one of equality, freedom and dignity is still a question mark.

Independent India for the past five decades has been trying to protect women from violence and discrimination and to strengthen their entitlements in the social and economic fields through scores of schemes, policies and programmes. In the institutional area, independent administrative departments, development corporations and commission for women have spring up at the centre as well as in the states. Also women's movement and their network with the international community often gives forceful expression to women's upliftment and issues in legislature, executive and judiciary for reviewing the age old principles of patriarchal society. Yet, the status of women from all the sections of the society is mixed and not substantially altered. In the face of global competition traditional economic occupations of women have withered. In the new economic regime, the withdrawal of the activities of the state leaves the women in cold. Further gender blind legislation and laws are extending its coverage of shadow on women.

Surprisingly, the empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world, not just India. These issues of gender equality are an area of discussion in National and International Conferences, research studies, various forums and even establishing of special departments for women welfare. The imperative of gender partnership in matters of development has been widely recognized and institutional mechanisms and interventions have been consciously built into the development design.

It has only been since the 1990's, when women have been identified as key agents of sustainable development and women's equality and empowerment are seen as central to a more holistic approach towards establishing new patterns and processes of development that are sustainable. Though the principal of gender equality was recognized in the United Nations Charter in 1945 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the majority of development planners did not fully address the role of women in development process. In 1975, the first UN Conference of Women and Development was held at Mexico under the motto, "Equality, Development and Peace". The need to integrate women into development was internationally proclaimed in the 1995 Beijing Conference. The Economic Survey (1999-2000) used an entire section on gender inequality. It began with a reminder of the commitment made in the ninth plan document of allocating 30 per cent of resources for women's development schemes through "Women's Component Plans". According to Menon and Prabhu (2001), there was a strong plea for investing in women's equality on the ground than this made economic sense and spoke of "the social rate of return on investment in women" being greater than the corresponding rate for men. According to Robeyns (2003), women's development can be attained by improving her status and bargaining power in the economy. Nussbaum (1995) argues that approaches and strategies for women empowerment could be possible by outlining the mechanisms and tools that will influence their empowerment and they are unable to realize their full identity and powers in all walks of life. The World Bank has suggested that empowerment of women should be a key aspect of all social development programs (World Bank, 2001). Since the 1980's the Government of India has shown increasing concern for women's issues through a variety of legislation promoting the education and political participation of women (Collier, 1998). International organizations like the World Bank and United Nations have focused on women's issues especially the empowerment of poor women in rural areas. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also taken on an increased role in the area of women's empowerment (Sadik, 1988). NGOs, previously catering to women's health and educational needs, have moved beyond this traditional focus to addressing the underlying causes of deprivations through promoting the economic and social empowerment of women (McNamara, 2003).

There are many challenges that face NGOs who make it their goal to empower women (Narayan, 2002; Mayoux, 2000; Malhotra and Mather, 1997).

Unfortunately, the efforts of empowerment are all on paper. The reality is that despite the fact that there has been an amelioration of condition of women with respect to education and employment, yet in terms of domestic violence and sexual harassment, the cases do not cease to exist. This study has been carried out to understand the level of empowerment of working women in the capital of India.

Review of Literature

Although the notion of women's empowerment has long been legitimized by international development agencies, what actually comprises empowerment, and how it is measured, is debated in the development literature. Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002) provide an excellent review of this debate. They review the many ways that empowerment can be measured and suggest that researchers should pay attention to the process in which empowerment occurs. The frequently used Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite measure of gender inequality in three key areas namely political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources (HDR, 2003). It is an aggregate index for a population and does not measure empowerment on an individual basis. It is made up of the two dimensions of economic participation and decision-making (measured by the percentage of female administrators and managers, and professional and technical employees), and political participation and decision-making (measured by the percentage of seats in parliament held by women). For the purpose of our study GEM does not capture the multi-dimensional view of women's empowerment. It cannot be assumed that if a development intervention promotes women's empowerment along a particular dimension that empowerment in other areas will necessarily follow. A number of studies have shown that women may be empowered in one area of life while not in others (Malhotra and Mather 1997; Kishor 2000b; Hashemi et al. 1996; Beegle et al. 1998). Comparable components of empowerment are included in the eight indicators by Hashemi et al (1996): mobility, economic security, ability to make small purchases, ability to make larger purchases, involvement in major decisions, relative freedom from domination by the family, political and legal awareness, and involvement in political campaigning and protests. Several different efforts have been made in recent years to develop comprehensive frameworks delineating the various dimensions on which women can be empowered (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender, 2002). Another viewpoint is that women's empowerment can be measured by factors contributing to each of the following: their personal, economic, familial, and political empowerment. Household and interfamilial relations have been included here as it is a central locus of women's disempowerment in India. And by including the political, it is posited that women's empowerment measures should include women's participation in systemic transformation by engaging in political action (Batliwala 1994; Bisnath and Elson 1999; Kabeer 2001; Narasimhan, 1999; and Sen and Grown, 1987). A women's role in household decision-making: control over money matters and other important household matter is a function of the family structure (Malhotra and Mather 1997). Whether a woman lives in a joint family (which includes the mother in law), or where she is a mother in law, or if she lives in nuclear family structure – all will have an impact on her autonomy. In a joint family she is likely to have less autonomy than in a nuclear family structure. Education has been argued as one of the indicators of empowerment (Malhotra and Mather, 1997). Indeed, many of the variables that have traditionally been used as proxies for empowerment, such as education and employment, are better described as "enabling factors" or "sources of empowerment" (Kishor 2000a). Empowerment includes cognitive and psychological elements, such as a women's understanding of her condition of subordination and the causes of such conditions. This requires an understanding of the self and the cultural and social expectations, which may be enabled by education (Stromquist, 1995). According to the UN 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, women empowerment has five components that include 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. It is against this background the present study has been undertaken.

Research Methodology

A survey was conducted in the capital region of Delhi, India to study women empowerment among working women. The capital city of Delhi, along with the state of Uttar Pradesh is the worst offender with respect to harassment of women in the workplace. As reported by the Times News Network on October 21, 2008, the cases of sexual harassment registered at workplaces in Delhi have gone up considerably in the last three years despite government measures and Supreme Court guidelines. Notwithstanding public outcry over the lack of safety for women in the city, the national capital continues to be vulnerable for the fairer sex with a reported increase in number of cases of crime against them.

To assess the level of women empowerment in the crime-stricken capital of India, this survey was conducted over a period of five months from October 2008 to February 2009. The findings of the study are constituted using a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections, namely personal details (Age, marital status, family members, education, employment status, organization, designation, work experience, city of residence) and a five-point Likert scale that was developed for assessing the empowerment status (through 35 statements). The questionnaire was administered on a sample of 200 working women, associated with various institutions, organizations and email groups including National Human Resource Development Network (NHRDN), ISTD (Indian Society of Training and Development), Schools and Universities based in Delhi and NCR (National Capital Region), India. The response rate was 46%, as 92 women respondents returned fully-filled usable questionnaires.

Data collected for the study was analyzed using factor analysis and analysis of variance.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The respondents in the survey are from different age groups, educational background, wide range of work experience employed in government and private sector, in industry and academics, working in Delhi. Table 1 gives the description of the characteristics of the survey participants. 71.7% of the women were in the age group of 20-35 years while 27.2% belonged to the age group of 36-50 years. The marital status of the women showed that 73.9% were married while 19.6% of them were single. The majority of the participants (70.7%) were working in the private sector while 22.8% had government jobs, and

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	20-35 Years	66	71.7
	36-50 Years	25	27.2
	51 Years & Above	1	1.1
Marital Status		**Frequency**	**Percent**
	Married	68	73.9
	Single	18	19.6
	Separated / Divorce	6	6.5
Employment Status		**Frequency**	**Percent**
	Government	21	22.8
	Private Sector	65	70.7
	Entrepreneur	6	6.5
Field – Academia & Industry		**Frequency**	**Percent**
	Academia	41	44.6
	Industry	51	55.4
	Total	92	100

6.5% were entrepreneurs. 55.4% of the respondents were working in the industry across various sectors, while the remaining were associated with academics (at school, college and university levels).

Factor analysis was conducted on the data collected on 35 statements. Principal components extraction was used with varimax rotation. The correlations between factors and the different items expressed by means of the factorial loads were significant. The rotated matrix identified six components (Table 2).

Table 2: Factor Analysis with Principal Component Method and Varimax Rotation

	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel threatened with eviction from my house.	0.06	0.38	0.03	0.06	0.59	0.27
Security is a problem for me at home.	0.20	0.11	0.20	0.24	0.20	0.56
My organization takes care of my well-being	0.09	0.23	0.11	0.84	0.23	0.23
I feel safe even when it gets late in the evening at work.	0.07	0.65	0.13	0.35	0.48	-0.03
I am treated with respect by my colleagues.	0.23	0.48	0.47	0.45	-0.13	0.21
I don't feel harassed at work due to my gender.	0.04	-0.01	0.11	-0.17	-0.44	-0.70
If I take a break from work due to familial obligations, my organization will allow me to rejoin.	0.10	0.10	0.37	0.60	0.28	-0.09
My organization gives me the option to work from home if required.	0.10	-0.13	0.07	0.20	0.81	0.12
My compensation is at par with my male counterparts.	0.20	0.86	0.16	0.23	0.13	0.01
I receive appreciation for good work done.	0.14	0.31	0.07	0.71	0.10	0.24
I am given equal promotion opportunities at work in comparison to the male co-workers.	0.00	0.63	0.31	0.41	-0.28	0.01
I am treated fairly in comparison to my male colleagues.	0.11	0.79	0.17	0.17	-0.15	0.06
I receive complete support from my management.	0.18	0.26	0.18	0.77	0.10	0.32
In my present employment I feel.	0.15	0.41	0.30	0.35	0.20	0.15
I can make my decisions regarding political decisions.	0.45	0.45	0.08	0.36	-0.02	0.20
I cast my vote as per my will.	0.52	0.51	0.37	0.11	0.01	0.07
I can access the judicial system to redress my grievance.	0.44	0.12	0.31	0.35	0.07	-0.12
I can participate in all community activities as per my wish.	0.56	0.44	0.20	0.29	0.21	-0.18
I can make my decisions regarding religious beliefs.	0.59	0.53	0.29	0.06	0.08	0.00
I can make my decisions regarding marriage choices.	0.37	0.34	0.44	0.37	0.05	-0.13
I can make my decisions regarding household expenditure.	0.06	0.06	0.74	0.15	0.05	0.10
In decision-making process at home, I have	0.48	0.18	0.50	0.26	0.03	0.16
In decision-making process at home, I am	0.31	0.30	0.60	0.11	0.19	-0.14
I can speak to and meet people outside my home.	0.76	0.12	0.15	0.32	0.09	0.18
I can go to any place I like.	0.69	0.11	0.24	-0.01	-0.13	0.25
I myself take decisions regarding my savings.	0.76	0.02	-0.07	0.01	0.06	0.03
I can spend my earnings at my discretion.	0.77	0.46	0.03	-0.11	0.21	0.03
I can make my decisions regarding childrens health.	0.16	0.50	0.65	-0.04	0.16	0.02
I can make my decisions regarding childrens education.	0.24	0.24	0.72	0.17	-0.13	0.03
I take leave from work during exigencies at home (like child falling sick, taking in-laws to doctor etc).	0.26	-0.03	-0.03	0.11	-0.22	-0.19
I can change my job whenever I want. It will be -	0.58	0.18	0.34	0.46	-0.23	0.03
I have a very high degree of control over decisions regarding my own personal welfare, health and body.	0.68	0.02	0.38	0.22	0.26	0.17
In deciding my occupation, I feel I have complete choice.	0.47	0.41	0.28	0.26	0.22	-0.23
I have had access to pursue education in the field of my choice.	0.30	-0.06	0.05	0.21	-0.04	0.71

Only three components were found to have reasonable item loadings (Table 3). The first factor had six items loaded and thus was identified as 'Empowerment at Home'. The second factor had twelve items loaded on it and thus was identified as 'Freedom for Life Choices'. The third factor had loading of six items and thus was identified as 'Empowerment at Workplace'. In all 24 statements were found to have high factor loading. The responses on these statements were retained under three factors. Empowerment at home related variables refers to women being in command to take decisions related to running the household expenses and savings, having an influence of women refers to decisions related to home, children's health and education. Freedom of life choices refers to the freedom to choose in various areas

Table 3: Factors Identified through Factor Analysis

Empowerment at Home						
I can make my decisions regarding marriage choices.	0.37	0.34	**0.44**	0.37	0.05	-0.13
I can make my decisions regarding household expenditure.	0.06	0.06	**0.74**	0.15	0.05	0.10
In decision-making process at home, I have a choice.	0.48	0.18	**0.50**	0.26	0.03	0.16
In decision-making process at home, I am involved.	0.31	0.30	**0.60**	0.11	0.19	-0.14
I can make my decisions regarding children's health.	0.16	0.50	**0.65**	-0.04	0.16	0.02
I can make my decisions regarding children's education.	0.24	0.24	**0.72**	0.17	-0.13	0.03
Freedom for Life Choices						
I can make my decisions regarding political decisions.	**0.45**	0.44	0.08	0.36	-0.02	0.20
I cast my vote as per my will.	**0.52**	0.51	0.37	0.11	0.01	0.07
I can access the judicial system to redress my grievance.	**0.44**	0.12	0.31	0.35	0.07	-0.12
I can make my decisions regarding religious beliefs.	**0.59**	0.53	0.29	0.06	0.08	0.00
I can speak to and meet people outside my home.	**0.76**	0.12	0.15	0.32	0.09	0.18
I can go to any place I like.	**0.69**	0.11	0.24	-0.01	-0.13	0.25
I myself take decisions regarding my savings.	**0.76**	0.02	-0.07	0.01	0.06	0.03
I can spend my earnings at my discretion.	**0.77**	0.46	0.03	-0.11	0.21	0.03
I can change my job whenever I want. It will be -	**0.58**	0.18	0.34	0.46	-0.23	0.03
I have a very high degree of control over decisions regarding my own personal welfare, health and body.	**0.68**	0.02	0.38	0.22	0.26	0.17
In deciding my occupation, I feel I have complete choice.	**0.47**	0.41	0.28	0.26	0.22	-0.23
I can participate in all community activities as per my wish.	**0.56**	0.44	0.20	0.29	0.21	-0.18
Empowerment At Workplace						
I am treated with respect by my colleagues.	0.23	**0.48**	0.47	0.45	-0.13	0.21
In my present employment I feel -	0.15	**0.41**	0.30	0.35	0.20	0.15
I feel safe even when it gets late in the evening at work.	0.07	**0.65**	0.13	0.35	0.48	-0.03
My compensation is at par with my male counterparts.	0.20	**0.86**	0.16	0.23	0.13	0.01
I am given equal promotion opportunities at work in comparison to the male co-workers.	0.00	**0.63**	0.31	0.41	-0.28	0.01
I am treated fairly in comparison to my male colleagues.	0.11	**0.79**	0.17	0.17	-0.15	0.06

including politics, casting votes, accessing the judicial system, and participation in community activities, decisions on religion adoption, freedom in decision making about socializing and visiting places, changing jobs, the degree with which they manage themselves with respect to their own welfare, career and education. Empowerment at workplace includes security issues, treatment meted out by their colleagues and peers, promotion opportunities and support from their organization.

Mean Values were calculated to see the level of empowerment of working women in Delhi. The table of means (Table 4) shows that the working women professionals in Delhi are highly empowered with

Table 4: Mean Values at Various Factors of Empowerment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Empowerment at Home	92	1.17	5	4.18
Freedom of Life Choices	92	1.42	5	4.26
Empowerment at Workplace	92	1.83	5	4.42
Total Empowerment Score	92	1.46	5	4.28

respect to their empowerment at home, freedom of life choices, empowerment at workplace and their total empowerment.

Analysis of Variance was applied to see the significant differences amongst the participants on various factors of women empowerment according to their age, marital status, sector of working and field of working. The results of Anova revealed that there is a significant difference between the women of various age groups on empowerment at home (Table 5). The table of means (Table 6) shows that women in the age group 51 and above are most empowered followed by women in the age group of 36-50 years. Women in the age group of 20-35 are least empowered as compared to other age groups. This is because in Indian Culture a women in the age group of 20-35 years is either single or in the first decade of her married life. For single women, the parents have a major say in decisions at home, while for married women, if they are living in a joint family, then major household decisions are taken by their in-laws. However these kinds of decisions are taken up by women in this age group only if they are living alone or with their spouse and kids.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on Various Factors of Women Empowerment According to Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment at Home	Between Groups	4.44	2	2.22	4.59	>.01
	Within Groups	43.05	89	0.48		
	Total	47.49	91			
Freedom of Life Choices	Between Groups	0.45	2	0.23	0.53	NS
	Within Groups	37.83	89	0.43		
	Total	38.28	91			
Empowerment at Workplace	Between Groups	0.31	2	0.15	0.27	NS
	Within Groups	50.76	89	0.57		
	Total	51.07	91			
Total Empowerment Score	Between Groups	0.96	2	0.48	1.31	NS
	Within Groups	32.49	89	0.37		
	Total	33.45	91			

Table 6: Mean Values on Age of Participants for Various Factors of Women Empowerment

		20-35 years	36-50 years	51 and above	Total
Empowerment at Home	Mean	4.05	4.53	4.67	4.18
	N	66	25	1	92
Freedom of Life Choices	Mean	4.22	4.36	4.50	4.26
	N	66	25	1	92
Empowerment at Workplace	Mean	4.38	4.50	4.67	4.42
	N	66	25	1	92
Total Empowerment Score	Mean	4.22	4.44	4.58	4.28
	N	66	25	1	92

The analysis of variance revealed that there is a significant difference between married, single and separated women on empowerment at home, freedom of life choices, empowerment at workplace, and total empowerment score (Table 7). The table of means (Table 8) shows that married women have maximum empowerment at home followed by single women and least empowered is separated or divorced women. The reason for this could be that in Indian homes, household decisions are taken by parents and single women is not much concerned with these kind of decisions, even for marital choices, the parents of the girl have a major say. Also in Indian society being separated or divorced is considered to be a taboo and women with such incidences are looked down. Such women always live with a feeling of neglect and insecurity, which kills the morale and self confidence. For freedom of life choices, empowerment at workplace and total empowerment score, single women is most empowered, followed by married women and then separated women. This is because single women living with her parents or alone has little restrictions to move around with people, in taking decisions about her personal self, job etc. While for a married women in India, these decisions are bounded by the influence of her spouse and in-laws. As for separated women, the feeling of being looked down and insecurity impede their most of the decisions.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance on Various Factors of Women Empowerment According to Marital Status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment at Home	Between Groups	11.67	2	5.84	14.50	>.001
	Within Groups	35.82	89	0.40		
	Total	47.49	91			
Freedom of Life Choices	Between Groups	3.79	2	1.89	4.88	>.01
	Within Groups	34.49	89	0.39		
	Total	38.28	91			
Empowerment at Workplace	Between Groups	6.19	2	3.09	6.14	>.01
	Within Groups	44.88	89	0.50		
	Total	51.07	91			
Total Empowerment Score	Between Groups	5.55	2	2.77	8.85	>.001
	Within Groups	27.90	89	0.31		
	Total	33.45	91			

Table 8: Mean Values on Marital Status of Participants for Various Factors of Women Empowerment

		Single	**Married**	**Separated/ Divorced**	**Total**
Empowerment at Home	Mean	4.07	4.33	2.89	4.18
	N	18	68	6	92
Freedom of Life Choices	Mean	4.45	4.27	3.54	4.26
	N	18	68	6	92
Empowerment at Workplace	Mean	4.62	4.45	3.47	4.42
	N	18	68	6	92
Total Empowerment Score	Mean	4.41	4.33	3.36	4.28
	N	18	68	6	92

The analysis of variance revealed that there is no difference in the empowerment of women across the sector (Table 9 Table 10). They may be working in government sector, private sector or entrepreneurs, all of them feel equally empowered. The analysis of variance shows that the women working in academics are more empowered than the women working in industry, even at home also (Table 11, Table 12). The probable reason for their difference in empowerment at home could be that the women those who are working in academics get more time to look at their home and thus can take decisions regarding household by themselves, while the women working in private sector does not find much of time to manage their homes, so these kind of decisions are taken up by others in home as they jointly take such decisions with their spouse. The probable reason for difference in their total score on empowerment could be that the women working in teaching gradually develop lot of self confidence since most of the time she deals with the people less empowered then them say students, while for women in industry does not have that leverage. Moreover in India, the women in academics are safer from the opposite sex as compared to those working in industry. This is a major reason for which young women are turning more towards academics in India rather than working in the industry.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance on various factors of Women Empowerment According to Sector of Working

		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Empowerment at Home	Between Groups	0.55	2	0.28	0.52	NS
	Within Groups	46.94	89	0.53		
	Total	47.49	91			
Freedom of Life Choices	Between Groups	0.56	2	0.28	0.67	NS
	Within Groups	37.71	89	0.42		
	Total	38.28	91			
Empowerment at Workplace	Between Groups	0.46	2	0.23	0.40	NS
	Within Groups	50.62	89	0.57		
	Total	51.07	91			
Total Empowerment Score	Between Groups	0.27	2	0.14	0.37	NS
	Within Groups	33.18	89	0.37		
	Total	33.45	91			

Table 10: Mean Values on Sector of Working of Participants for Various Factors of Women Empowerment

		Private	Govern-ment	Entrepre-neur	Total
Empowerment at Home	Mean	4.16	4.31	4.03	4.18
	N	65	21	6	92
Freedom of Life Choices	Mean	4.21	4.37	4.42	4.26
	N	65	21	6	92
Empowerment at Workplace	Mean	4.42	4.48	4.17	4.42
	N	65	21	6	92
Total Empowerment Score	Mean	4.25	4.38	4.26	4.28
	N	65	21	6	92

Table 11: Analysis of Variance on Various Factors of Women Empowerment According to Field

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment at Home	Between Groups	4.57	1	4.57	9.59	>.01
	Within Groups	42.92	90	0.48		
	Total	47.49	91			
Freedom of Life Choices	Between Groups	0.71	1	0.71	1.69	NS
	Within Groups	37.57	90	0.42		
	Total	38.28	91			
Empowerment at Workplace	Between Groups	0.90	1	0.90	1.61	NS
	Within Groups	50.18	90	0.56		
	Total	51.07	91			
Total Empowerment Score	Between Groups	1.38	1	1.38	3.87	>.05
	Within Groups	32.07	90	0.36		
	Total	33.45	91			

Table 12: Mean Values on Field of Participants for Various Factors of Women Empowerment

		Academia	Industry	Total
Empowerment at Home	Mean	4.43	3.98	4.18
	N	41	51	92
Freedom of Life Choices	Mean	4.36	4.18	4.26
	N	41	51	92
Empowerment at Workplace	Mean	4.53	4.33	4.42
	N	41	51	92
Total Empowerment Score	Mean	4.42	4.17	4.28
	N	41	51	92

There is no denying that there has been an improvement in the condition of the women, seeing the fact that the women are not only educated, atleast the level of graduation and all are working in different positions, including very senior management positions. There are even situations where women have become entrepreneurs. However, there is a significant difference with respect to the control, influence and compromise of married women and single women. Safety, workplace violence is a high concern and 65% of the women felt unsafe in the capital of India particularly at night. Collective and organized crime against women like gang-rapes, sexual exploitations of young girls, flesh trade, kidnapping and abduction, molestation, sexual harassment, murders and dowry deaths are common headlines of the newspapers. If a woman is unsafe, or is under fear and tension, then empowerment is a far cry. However, safety being the only major concern, women in India is becoming more empowered day by day. The percentage of working women has significantly increased in past two decades.

Discussion and Conclusion

The situation of women and girl child is improving in India. The government of India is making umpteen efforts to uplift the girl child. The education for girl child is free till high school and particularly in capital region the state government pays a certain amount to the parents of girl child in lower strata of society for their upbringing. Still we cannot talk of women empowerment when cases of violence against women are rampant everywhere. Society needs to change itself and the way it thinks. What needs to begin is a movement to empower the girl child from the very beginning of her existence. Her upbringing needs to be changed. She cannot be brought up in an environment where women are taught to remain subdued; their aspirations cannot be curbed because they are females, they cannot be ignored. The girl child needs to grow learning that she is no less than her brother. She needs to know that a wide range of avenues wait for her to be explored in this world of hi tech lifestyle. The urban India has already tasted this change, but the situation has to be improved in rural parts which constitutes the major part of our population. The government and NGOs are doing their very best to bring out changes in these areas. Women empowerment drives and initiatives will continue and some will do wonders in achieving their goals. But the real difference will come only once the foundation of our society undergoes dramatic transformation.

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