

Determinants Of Women Empowerment: Evidence From Welenchiti Town, East Central Ethiopia

Hewan Birhanu* and Rajendrakumar Parmar

*Corresponding Email: hewanbirhanu@yahoo.com

Hewan Birhanu is from Africa, Ethiopia. She is an instructor at Debrebrhan University, Ethiopia. Now she is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of social psychology at Parul University. Her research area is gender and development.

Rajendrakumar Parmar is Educator with advanced Psychology Doctorate Degree and 11+ year's classroom experience in teaching Psychology and Social Work seeks position as an Assistant Professor and HODs. He is now a head of psychology department, IQAC Coordinator at Faculty of Arts, Parul University, Vadodara Gujarat, India.

Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the factors influencing women's empowerment in Welenchiti town, East Central Ethiopia. An explanatory research design with an integration of a quantitative research approach was used. The data were collected using a questionnaire from women (married women from male household heads and female household heads). The collected data was processed and analyzed using ordered logistic regression analysis with the help of SPSS software version 26. Keeping other independent variables constant, the findings show that a unit increase in monthly income increases women's empowerment by 1.001 units. Similarly, one unit increase in monitoring and evaluation and access to training results in a 4.133 and 7.396 unit increase in women's empowerment, respectively. On the other hand, for every unit increase in gender discrimination and family burden, women's empowerment falls by 0.176 and 0.608 units, respectively. Therefore, the researcher suggested that proper attention be paid to the implementation of women's empowerment strategies and policies in the study area.

Keywords: Empowerment; Ordered logistic Regression; Women.

Introduction

Women's empowerment is critical to achieving sustainable and people-centered balanced development. Various studies have shown that women's empowerment is important for improving economic, social, and political conditions, as well as reducing poverty and encouraging economic growth. Women's empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life will contribute to society's long-term development and change in social conditions. It should be noted that the goal of women's empowerment is to promote equal participation of men and women in society (Parpart, 2014).

Access to and control of productive resources, information, training and education, employment, and decision-making are limited for Ethiopian women, and they face economic, social, cultural, and political disadvantages in the enjoyment of equal rights, access to opportunities, decision-making processes, and basic emerging that support and encourage women's participation in development (Ogato, 2013).

Women's empowerment benefits not only their families and communities but also the nation as a whole. However, women in Ethiopia have a lower status than men in many ways; they receive fewer social services and hold lower positions in all economic, political, social, and cultural affairs (Belay, 2013). When it comes to employment, data from the Federal Civil Service Agency on federal government employees show that women occupied only 18.3 percent of all professional and scientific positions, and 25 percent of management positions, indicating that men continue to dominate the top and middle levels of the civil service. According to the same source, women, on the other hand, hold 71% of secretarial and financial jobs and 51% of custodial and manual jobs (FDRECSA, 2014).

A study on the empowerment of women in Ethiopia points out that women are involved in all aspects of the society's life; significantly contributing to the economy and welfare of the society. However, due to the existence and practice of patriarchal traditions and culture, they are placed in a lower position compared to men. They continue to face various forms of gender-based discrimination at all levels and have been deprived of access to and control over resources (Meron, 2016).

The gender issue in Ethiopia generally, and Welenchiti town, in particular, was not addressed by gender structures for various job opportunities. Women still have lower socioeconomic status than men despite numerous positive steps being taken to address gender gaps in various socioeconomic sectors in the nation as a whole and Welenchiti town in particular. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the variables that affect women's empowerment in Welenchiti, East Central Ethiopia.

Literature review

Empowerment of Women

Women's empowerment refers to the ability of women to acquire authority and control over their own lives. Raising awareness, fostering self-assurance, expanding options, gaining greater access to and control over resources, and taking steps to change the institutions and structures that support and sustain gender inequality and discrimination are all part of this process. Women empower themselves because empowerment comes from within. It is difficult to empower women with their own men's involvement; men must be included in the transformational process. Rising women's power in empowerment strategies refers to alternative forms of power to achieve shared goals without coercion or dominance rather than power over or controlling forms of power (Allsopp & Tallontire, 2014).

Dimensions of Women's Empowerment

Empowerment is a multifaceted concept that includes women's self-confidence, resource access, ability to participate in productive activities, social awareness, and ability to negotiate on an individual basis. These components fall under the categories of political, social, and economic empowerment.

Economic Empowerment

Due to their greater economic disadvantage compared to men, women's education and gender mainstreaming are important for their economic development. Economic empowerment is defined as raising women's awareness of their value in the economy, allowing them to become financially independent, and taking into account their significant contributions to the production process. Economic empowerment is a process and a stage that must be attained by creating strategies that concentrate on enhancing women's credit value and financial independence by eliminating all gender-specific barriers that prevent women from obtaining access to their fair share in all spheres of life. Due to the possibility of fairly unequal income distribution within the household, household income is a poor indicator of the welfare of women. Therefore, for women to be able to pursue justice and equality, economic empowerment is a requirement (Pitta, 2010).

Social Empowerment

Because ensuring human dignity for all members of any human society is its primary duty, social empowerment entails a more equitable social status for women in society. It is frequently argued that making it possible for women to access money is not always an effective way to achieve women's empowerment unless it is linked to other types of activities like education about the effects of women's subordination, the idea of self-esteem, and the significance and advantages of empowering women. The strategy for achieving gender equity is based on the understanding that all initiatives in support of women must guarantee a setting free from all forms of violence against women as well as an adequate representation of women at the highest levels of

policy. Women will be in a position to make decisions for improving their low socioeconomic status when they are given a voice in family decision-making. They start to change how gender relations are perceived, so instead of being treated as beneficiaries, they are to be treated as equal partners in decision-making and implementation (Tinku, 2009).

Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is a strategy that enables women to become more mobile, overcome their isolation, build their self-esteem, establish their public personas, and take part in decision-making within an expanding framework of awareness and critical analysis to steer and control the course of development. Political empowerment includes the right to access the institutionalized centers of power as well as the equal right to permission, which is more significant. Women's participation has been acknowledged as a step toward empowerment. The level of women's participation in politics today is one of the concerns. The right to vote, the ability to run for office, the role of women as supporters and members, their participation in the decision-making process, and the appointment of women to all levels of government is all examples of political empowerment. Women's participation in elections demonstrates both their political consciousness and aspirations for status advancement (Rameshwari & Babitha, 2008).

Methodology

Because it is used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between dependent and independent variables, the study used an exploratory research design. The study also employed a quantitative research methodology to investigate the factors that contribute to women's empowerment. Women served as the main data sources (married women from male-headed households and female-headed households). According to information from CSA (2020), the study's target population totaled 3846 households (3521 married women from male household heads and 325 female household heads). The sample size was established using this

data as a reference point. Using Yamane's (1967) formula, the number of sample households included in the data collection was determined.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3846}{1 + 3846(0.07)^2}$$

$$n \approx 194$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = Total Population

e = Sampling Error

The multi-stage sampling method was used to choose specific respondents. The sub-city was chosen in the first stage using a straightforward random sampling method. Kebeles were chosen in the second stage using a straightforward random sampling method. The population was divided into married women from male household heads and female household heads in the third stage using stratified random sampling. The probability proportional to the sampling method will then be used to determine the proportional numbers of respondents from each group and the chosen Kebeles. Finally, using techniques of systematic random sampling, specific respondents from the sampling frame will be chosen.

Data was gathered via questionnaire, cleaned, and coded before being entered into SPSS for Windows version 26. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation were used in the analysis techniques to determine the level of women's empowerment and to describe respondents' backgrounds. Additionally, ordered logistic regression analysis was used to investigate the variables influencing women's empowerment.

Findings/Results

Data were collected from 194 respondents, but only 159 respondents were included in the analysis due to 35 respondents being excluded because of incomplete responses or ineligibility.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

Analyzing the background characteristics of the respondents is important to understand their profile included in the study. Accordingly, respondent's age, income, education level, marital status, and household size have been analyzed and presented as follows:

Table 1: Background Characteristics of Sample Respondents (n=159)

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean (SD)
Age	15-24	6	3.8	33.03 (6.3)
	25-34	91	57.2	
	35-44	53	33.3	
	45-54	9	5.7	
Income	1,500-3,999	97	48.4	3922.96 (1546.33)
	4,000-6,499	54	40.3	
	6,500-8,999	8	11.3	
Education Level	Not educated	6	3.8	
	Grade 1-8	7	4.4	
	Grade 9-12	85	53.5	
	Diploma and above	61	38.4	
Marital Status	Single	47	29.6	
	Married	106	66.7	
	Widowed	5	3.1	
	Divorced	1	0.6	
Household Size	1-4	109	68.6	3.69 (2.28)
	5-8	44	27.7	
	9-12	6	3.8	

According to Table 1's findings, 56.2% of sample respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34, 33.3% were between the ages of 35 and 44, and 5.7% were between the ages of 45 and 54. Finally, a small percentage of respondents, or 3.8%, are between the ages of 15 and 24. Likewise, the respondent's average age was determined to be 33.03 years old since age is a continuous variable and is measured in years. As can be seen from the results above, a sizable portion of the sample's respondents is in their midst and younger years, indicating that the majority of them are in the productive age range.

The analysis findings regarding the respondents' monthly income showed that (44%) of sampled women earn between 1500 and 3999 Birr. Likewise, 40.3% of them earned between 4000-6499 Birr, and 11.3% of them earned between 6500-8999 Birr. Furthermore, the respondents' average monthly income in the study area was 3922.96 Birr. This showed that the study area's sampled women had a moderate income, which helped them increase their level of empowerment.

The result in Table 1 shows that 53.5% of the sampled respondents attended grades 9 through 12, and 38.4% of them had a diploma or higher. In addition, 4.4% of respondents said they attended grades 1 through 8. 3.8% of those surveyed who didn't attend school constituted the remainder. The findings showed that the majority of respondents had high school degrees or higher.

In terms of respondents' marital status, the majority (66.7%) were married, while 29.6% were single. Likewise, 3.1% of the respondents were widowed, and only a small percentage (0.6%) was divorced. This suggests that the majority of respondents were married, had children, and were responsible for the household, suggesting that women may have had some bargaining power. This indicated that married respondents made up the majority of sampled women in the study area. Therefore, compared to single, widowed, or divorced women, married women are less likely to feel empowered.

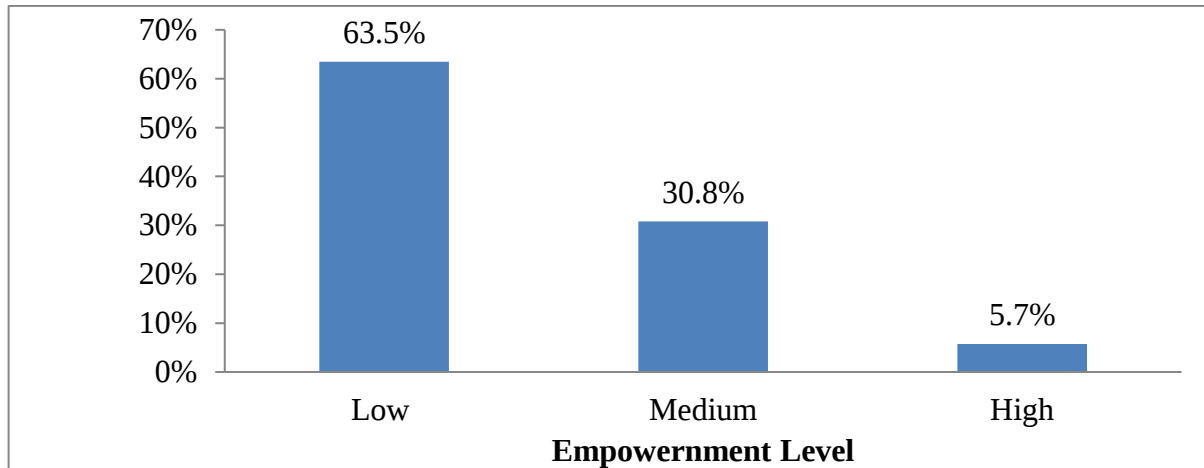
The total number of family members living in a household is referred to as the household size. As shown in Table 1, approximately 68.6% of households had a size ranging from 1 to 4, while 27.7% had a size ranging from 5 to 8. The remaining 3.8% of the households were between 9 and 12 people in size. In addition, the study indicated that the average household size was 3.69. This suggests that women in the study area are responsible for carrying the burden of household work.

Factors influencing women's empowerment

Women's empowerment is the study's dependent variable. Using data classification and presentation techniques, the

computed empowerment index was divided into three categories of empowerment levels, namely “low empowered,” “medium empowered,” and “high empowered.” The results are presented as follows:

Figure 1: Empowerment level of women in the study area



The results of Figure 1 show that only 5.7% of the sample's women have high levels of empowerment, while the majority of women (63.5%) have low levels. The remaining 30.8% of women were classified as having a medium level of empowerment. The result showed that the majority of sampled women in the study area exercise a low level of empowerment. This means the ability of women to control their assets and income is limited in the study area.

Table 2: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients and Model Summary

Chi-square	Df	Sig.	Pseudo R Square
76.719***	9	0.000	0.476

When all independent variables (educational level, monthly income, gender discrimination, monitoring & evaluation, commitment to gender, family burden, family support, cultural norms, and access to training) are included, the Chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 79.719$, $df=9$, $p<0.01$) from the model summary shows that the overall model is significant. According to the “pseudo” R^2 estimates, a linear combination of the nine independent variables can accurately predict

about 47.6% of the variance of women's empowerment levels.

Table 3: Results of Ordered Logistic Regression Model

Variables	B	S.E	Wald	Odds Ratio	p-value
Educational level	.473	.314	2.270	1.604	.132
Monthly income	.001***	.000	32.815	1.001	.000
Gender discrimination	-1.735**	.507	11.702	0.176	.001
Monitoring & evaluation	1.419*	.582	5.939	4.133	.015
Saving status of women	.041	.501	.007	1.041	.935
Family burden	-.497*	.248	4.023	0.608	.045
Family support	1.054	1.452	.527	2.869	.468
Cultural norms	-1.154	.846	1.862	0.315	.172
Access to training	2.001***	.441	20.636	7.396	.000

Note: β = Ordered logit coefficient (Estimate), SE=Standard Error, *, ** & *** Significant at 5%, 1% level and 0.1% level respectively

The results of Table 3 showed that out of nine variables which were included in the model, five predictors were found to have a significant impact on women's empowerment. According to the results of ordered logistic regression, monthly income level has a positive and significant impact on women's empowerment ($\beta = 0.001$, $p < 0.01$), with an odds ratio (OR) indicating that a one-unit increase in a woman's income leads to a 1.001 change in women's empowerment. Gender discrimination has a negative impact on women's empowerment ($\beta = -1.735$, $p < 0.01$), with an odds ratio (OR=0.176) indicating that a one-unit increase in discrimination decreases women's empowerment by 0.176 units. Monitoring and evaluation contribute positively to women's empowerment ($\beta = 1.419$, $p < 0.05$), with an odds ratio (OR=4.133) indicating a 4.133 change in empowerment levels if gender mainstreaming strategies are observed and evaluated. Family responsibility has a negative impact on women's empowerment ($\beta = -0.497$, $p < 0.05$), with an odds ratio (OR=0.608) indicating a 0.608 decrease in empowerment for a unit increase in family burden. Access to training has a positive impact on women's empowerment (β

= 2.001, $p < 0.01$), with an odds ratio (OR=7.396) indicating a 7.396 change in empowerment levels for a one-unit increase in training access.

Discussion

Women with higher incomes have higher levels of empowerment because they can save more money and make better decisions for the welfare of their families due to their economic roles in the home. Regarding this discovery, Mejia (2015) pointed out that access to the financial system through monthly income or daily business positively impacts decision-making at home and in the community, directly enhancing women's empowerment. Young (2015) continued by saying that starting formal and informal businesses with very little capital, building networks to make the most of scarce resources, and empowering women.

Gender discrimination has a statistically significant effect on women's empowerment. Similar results were found by Al Gharaibeh (2011), who found that gender inequality based on societal remnants from the past discourages women's empowerment. It also presents a challenge for women in their quest for equality. As a result, identifying particular obstacles and some potential future steps in the social experiment reduces gender discrimination and increases women's empowerment.

Monitoring and evaluation contribute to women's empowerment in a positive and significant way. Likewise, Sastre-Merino (2014) found that using empowerment assessment can help to support women's empowerment in urban areas and to aid programs in achieving their objectives. This finding is consistent with the findings of this study. The framework for the urban project and its evaluation was based on the empowerment evaluation principles of improvement, inclusion, democratic involvement, and capacity building, as well as a regard for local expertise, local ownership, and local responsibility. Additionally, Fetterman (2015) noted that empowerment evaluation enables women to keep track of and assess their performance. Additionally, it is employed to

assist in achieving organizational objectives based on policies and programs.

Women lost some of their power as they devoted more time to household duties. In connection to this finding, Young (2015) stated that women's caretaking responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, the sick, and the elderly, prevent them from exercising their rights.

Access to training has a statistically significant effect on women's empowerment. Thompson (2014) discovered that access to training increases women's options and supports the current finding. Additionally, it provides an informed and embodied understanding of violence, extensive options to recognize, prevent, and end gender discrimination, and the potential for women and girls to immediately become powerful and effective social change agents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The primary factors affecting women's empowerment in the study area are monthly income, gender discrimination, monitoring and evaluation, family responsibilities, and access to training. Women who earn more money and have less responsibility for the family are more likely to experience empowerment. Similarly to this, women who work in organizations with lower levels of gender discrimination and receive training and monitoring have the potential to become more powerful. This means that for women to be able to demand justice and equality, economic empowerment is a requirement. To increase women's credit value and financial independence, the city administration microfinance institution should devise strategies that do away with all barriers that are gender-specific and prevent women from participating fully in all facets of life.

Action needs to be taken against the practice that denies women equal rights in political, economic, social, and employment matters by the town administration's office for women and children. Women can do this by increasing awareness, gaining self-assurance, expanding their options, having more access to and control over resources, and taking

action to change the institutions and structures that support and sustain gender inequality and discrimination. Similarly to this, job descriptions, work plans, and performance reviews must eventually take gender integration responsibility into account for the Welenchiti town women and children affairs and civil service institutions.

Women's empowerment is significantly impacted by the demands of family life. Outside of household duties, women have traditionally had limited independence. Electricity consequently tends to cut down on the amount of time spent on housework and caregiving, despite its limited use for cooking. Despite spending more time watching television for information, women who live in electrified homes tend to lead more balanced lives and have more options for how they spend their time. Similarly, to empower women economically, socially, culturally, and politically, other stakeholders, including those involved in the city administration's women and children affairs, should have access to training opportunities.

References

- Al Gharaibeh, F. (2011). Women's Empowerment in Bahrain. *Journal of International Women*, 12(3), 96–113. Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol12/iss3/7>
- Alsop, R. & Heinsohn, N. (2005). *Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper.
- Belay, E. (2013). *Women Empowerment Practice in Ethiopian Federal Civil Services: The Case of Five Selected Ministries* (Doctoral dissertation, Addis Ababa University Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).
- FDRECSA. (2014). *Ethiopia Time Use Survey 2013: How Women and Men Spend Their Time*. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency, Ethiopia
- Ferree Myra, Marx. (2004). *The frame-work of gender politics: 'Race, class and gender discourses in the context of European integration'*. Paper presented to ESRC Gender Mainstreaming Seminar, Leeds, and May, 2004.

- Fetterman, D. M. (2015). Empowerment Evaluation in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition, 577–583. <https://doi.org/10.1016>
- George, D. & Mallery P. (2003) SPSS for Windows Step By Step: A Simple Guide and Reference. 11.0 Update (4th ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Green, W. (2008). “Modeling Ordered Choices: A primer and Recent Developments” Working Papers pp.08-26, New York University, Leonardo N. Stern School of Business, Department of Economics.
- Liao, T. (1994). Interpreting probability model Logit, Probit and other Generalized linear models. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mejia, C. U. (2015). Bancarización y empoderamiento de las mujeres. *Banking Women Empowerment* No. 75 pp. 265–316. <https://doi.org/10.13043/DYS.75.7>
- Ogato Gs. (2013). The Quest for Gender Responsive information communication Technologies (ICTs) policy in the least developed countries: policy and strategy Implications for promoting Gender Equality and women empowerment in Ethiopia. *Int.J. Info technol Bus manage*
- Parpart J. L. (2014). Exploring the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming in international development institutions and *Journal of International Development* 26(3), 382-395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.2948>
- Sastre-Merino S. Vidueira P., Díaz-Puente J. M., Fernández-Moral M. J. (2014). Capacity Building through Empowerment Evaluation an Aymara Women Artisans Organization in Puno in *Empowerment Evaluation* (76–85).
- Thompson, M. E. (2014). Empowering Self-Defense Training, *Violence against Women* 20(3), 351–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801214526051>
- Tinku Paul. (2009). *Women Empowerment through work Participation*, New Delhi: New Century Publications, p. 32.
- Upadhyay, U. D., & Karasek, D. (2012). Women’s empowerment and ideal family size: an examination of DHS empowerment measures in Sub-Saharan Africa.

International perspectives on sexual and reproductive health, 78-89.

https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/3807812.pdf

Young, E. (2015). Boost Women's Economic Empowerment.

Women Deliver. Retrieved from: <http://womendeliver.org>