

Measuring Empowerment Between Working And Non-Working Women – A Study Of Women In Bangalore City

Dr. SOPHIA SHARON M¹, Dr. PREMA LATHA V²

¹Associate Professor, Mount Carmel College, Autonomous, Bangalore, sophia.sharon@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Mount Carmel College, Autonomous, Bangalore, lathabernard2007@gmail.com

Abstract. Given the undeniable reality that women constitute 50% of the global population and possess significant capabilities to make valuable contributions to a nation's advancement, it is imperative to place a high level of importance on the empowerment of women as a fundamental aspect of socioeconomic development. The main purpose of this article is to conduct an in-depth examination of the levels of empowerment experienced by women who are employed and those who are not, with a particular emphasis on the unique circumstances found in Bangalore. The current study exhibits a descriptive orientation. The primary data was obtained from a sample of women who have been actively employed in small industries for a duration of five years. Additionally, the study also included a group of women who have not been engaged in small industries during the same time frame. A sample size of 100 respondents has been acquired for each group, employing the Cochran Formula to accommodate an undisclosed population. By employing a rigorous methodology, we have successfully achieved a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 10% in our research outcomes. The Questionnaire has been thoughtfully designed, taking into consideration the variables that were identified during the extensive research review. The questionnaire employs Likert scale items to gather data, and we also evaluate its convergent-divergent validity, ensuring that the statistical measures fall within acceptable ranges. The process of accomplishing data analysis involves the presentation of descriptive statistics, which is subsequently followed by hypothesis testing utilizing the SPSS Version 25 and AMOS R Version 23 software tools. The study's focus is exclusively on the geographical area of Bangalore District, which is situated within the state of Karnataka, India. The focus of our research revolves around the working women and its potential for empowerment, specifically emphasizing small business units. Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that women who are engaged in employment exhibit higher levels of empowerment in various aspects of their lives, including personal, relational, and environmental domains.

Keywords: Empowerment, Working women, Non-working women, Small business units

1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the fact that women make up 50% of the global population and possess immense potential to contribute to a nation's progress, it is crucial to prioritize women's empowerment as a key measure of socioeconomic development. The primary objective of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the empowerment levels among working and non-working women, with a specific focus on the Bangalore context. In this analysis, we have considered the extent of women's decision-making authority as a key measure of their empowerment level. Women, especially in emerging markets like India, hold a significant position in ensuring the overall welfare of their families. The empowerment of women in making decisions within the family has been recognized as a critical determinant that can significantly influence the overall welfare of the family unit. Numerous esteemed researchers have duly acknowledged the significance of spousal decision-making.

To attain equality and foster harmony within both the household and the nation, it has been duly recognized that the active engagement of women in decision-making processes across all echelons is imperative for achieving favorable outcomes. While acknowledging the significance of women's involvement in family decision-making, it is crucial to note that the decision-making authority of women is often limited within the cultural contexts prevalent in many developing nations. In traditional business structures, male individuals often hold a dominant position and possess more influence and decision-making authority within the household due to their gender and role as the household's "head." In a similar context, it is noteworthy that Bangalore still maintains a patriarchal societal structure, wherein husbands retain their role as the primary providers and decision-makers within the family unit. While it is worth noting that a significant number of households are led by women, it is unfortunate that their role as key contributors and decision-makers in the family's financial stability often goes unrecognized.

The decision-making patterns of women, however, have undergone significant changes in recent decades. In Bangalore, we have observed a significant rise in the influx of married women joining the labor force. According to a recent report released by the esteemed Department of Census Bangalore, it has been

revealed that the participation of women in the labor force has reached an impressive 52 percent as of August 2021. This significant increase in women's engagement in the workforce is expected to have a profound impact on family decision-making in the foreseeable future. The article aims to provide a comprehensive definition of decision-making power, specifically in relation to the empowerment of both working and non-working women, from a modern standpoint.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To assess the extent of women's decision-making authority and empowerment, our team employed a range of theoretical frameworks. Prior to delving into the forthcoming theories to be expounded upon in this article, it is imperative to establish a clear and concise definition of the concept of empowerment (Adhikari, H., 2022). To establish and conceptualize empowerment, it is imperative to emphasize that empowerment entails the acquisition of power in its most literal form (Z Oxaal, & S Baden, 1997). The empowerment of women to assume command over their own lives, as delineated by the prevailing body of literature, is epitomized by a profound sense of self-assurance. There exists a subset of women who possess a significant array of options and consequently wield a substantial amount of influence. These women can be aptly described as individuals who have attained a state of empowerment. Women's empowerment encompasses the essential elements of autonomy, equitable access to household resources, and the ability to exercise decision-making authority in their personal lives. We have carefully reviewed the following academic references: N. Kabeer (1999), M.H. Marchand and J.L. Parpart (1995), C.O.N Moser (1993), and K. Young (1993).

According to the research conducted by S. Batliwala in 1995, decision-making power can be described as the level of authority one possesses in managing material, human, and intellectual resources within various sectors of society. Physical resources, human resources, intellectual resources, and financial resources are the four broad categories of resources that can be effectively divided within a business framework. As per her analysis, power is distributed in an unequal manner between two distinct groups: the group with significant influence over power sources, commonly referred to as the powerful group, and the group lacking control over these power sources, often referred to as the powerless group, with limited or no control. In the realm of business, it is evident that the magnitude of influence wielded by a formidable collective is in direct correlation with the multitude of diverse resources they possess and oversee. Our esteemed author highlights the utmost significance of this control that bestows the authority to make crucial decisions. This control can be exercised through three fundamental avenues: firstly, by actively making decisions; secondly, by guiding and instructing others to execute those decisions; and lastly, by exerting influence over the decisions of others without direct intervention - a truly formidable form of control in many respects. These types of decision-making, however, can be utilized to enhance accessibility and ownership of resources such as income and education.

The theory developed by Friedmann in 1992 is based on the fundamental concept of empowerment, which revolves around the interplay between knowledge and power. Our esteemed business owner has identified and categorized three distinct forms of power: social power, political power, and psychological power. However, within this study, the notions of social and psychological power are intricately linked to the concept of power. In the realm of business, it is widely acknowledged that information, knowledge, and skills hold significant value and are regarded as essential sources of social power. Nevertheless, an expanding repertoire of scholarly works has started to allocate greater focus towards the resources that exert influence on the process of family decision-making. The decision-making power of a woman within the family is contingent upon her available resources, including her income.

According to a study conducted by Ngome in 2003, it was discovered that engaging in income-generating activities has a positive impact on women's involvement in household decision-making. This is attributed to the direct correlation between increased income and enhanced participation in decision-making within the household. In addition to this, it is believed that when a woman possesses the capability to fulfill her family's requirements, she will earn a higher level of esteem from her spouse. Additional factors, such as the husband's level of income and economic status, can potentially influence the decision-making authority of women. According to a study conducted by Elizabeth and Duncan T. in 2003, individuals hailing from families of higher social standing exhibited a greater propensity for assuming responsibility in matters pertaining to their children's health, educational expenses, durable expenditures, and the utilization of contraception. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that a woman's decision-making authority is impacted by the status of her spouse.

According to previous studies conducted by esteemed researchers such as T. Green, Robert, and C.M Isabella Cunningham in 1975, it has been established that women who are employed are more inclined to actively engage in the process of making decisions within their families, as compared to women who are not employed. The occupational status of women plays a crucial role in shaping their family decision-making patterns, whether they are employed or not, as indicated by research findings. Lee and Beatty have conducted research that highlights the influence of women's working conditions on their decision-making patterns. Interestingly, this impact remains consistent across women of varying working statuses, whether high or low. The article made an endeavor to assess the level of decision-making authority among employed and unemployed women, taking into account their empowerment.

3. Objectives

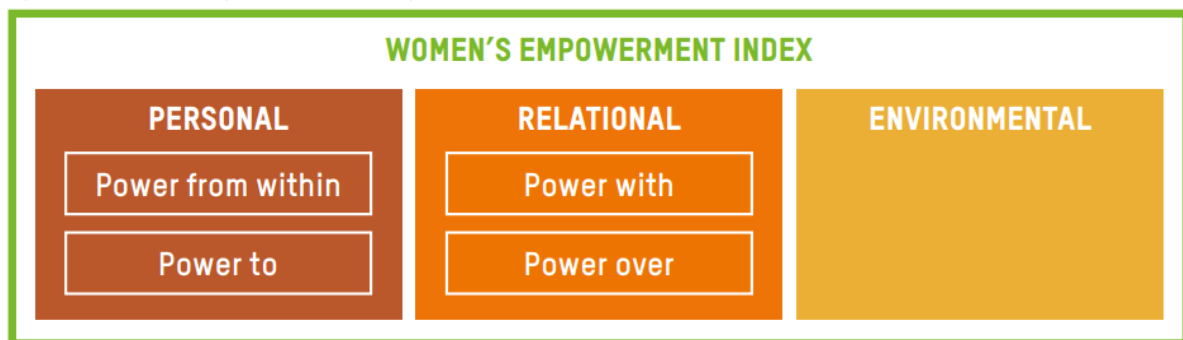
The objective of the study is to measure the difference in women empowerment between working and non-working women, with special reference to Small business units in Bangalore District.

4. Conceptual background of the study

The analysis is grounded on the framework put forth by Rowlands (1997), wherein control can be manifested through four distinct avenues: internal power, authoritative power, collaborative power, and hierarchical power. Personal self-confidence is widely recognized as a valuable asset in maintaining psychological control, while force aligns with the concept of independent agency, which refers to the ability to make informed choices and effectively execute actions. Empowerment is a highly effective collaborative mechanism that fosters the invaluable support and meaningful interaction among peers and esteemed organizations, as per the insights provided by Power with. Power Over is a comprehensive evaluation of the influential control wielded by those in positions of power over individuals who lack such authority. This assessment specifically focuses on the intricate power dynamics that exist between a woman and various members of her family or society.

In Figure 1, we can observe the manner in which the four dimensions of force (within, to, with, and over) interact with the various stages of shift (personal, relational, environmental). The concept of power within and power to, pertaining to the transformations taking place within an individual, can also be categorized as personal changes. In order to provide a more accurate depiction, we utilize indicators that pertain to a woman's self-perception and her perception of other women in society to elucidate internal power dynamics. Similarly, we rely on indicators that pertain to a woman's ability to make decisions and execute actions to describe external power dynamics.

Figure 1- Measuring Women's Empowerment



Control and power are integral aspects that are closely associated with the dynamics of a woman's network. These factors play a significant role in shaping the relational changes within her network.

The characterization of control is based on the utilization of indicators related to social capital and community participation. The utilization of indicators that delineate the power dynamics between the female individual and other individuals is employed to establish a sense of authority and control (whether it be within the confines of the household, community, or various groups).

Oxfam has not thoroughly explored the environmental aspect as much as the other two organizations. This is partly due to our evaluations focusing on finding comparable groups that reside in similar settings and are subject to the same gendered rules and cultural expectations as our intervention party. Oxfam acknowledges that this poses a significant challenge as policies can potentially influence and have already influenced various environmental aspects. These include forming alliances with partners to enhance collective power and subtly altering group norms in ways that may not be immediately noticeable. The limited progress in the development of the environmental aspect, as opposed to the personal and relational aspects, can be attributed mainly to the scale of existing programs (primarily focused on

households and communities) and the design of the assessments employed. Further discussion on this dimension will be addressed in future iterations of the method.

5. METHODOLOGY

The present study possesses a descriptive nature. The primary objectives of descriptive research encompass the elucidation, illustration, and substantiation of scientific findings. The primary data was collected from working women who have been employed in small industries for the past five years, as well as non-working women who have not been involved in small industries during the same time period. We have obtained a sample size of 100 respondents for each group, using the Cochran Formula to account for an unknown population. This ensures a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error in our findings.

The Questionnaire has been meticulously constructed utilizing the variables that were identified during the comprehensive research review. The questionnaire has been meticulously structured into three distinct sections, each thoughtfully designed to gather essential demographic information from our esteemed respondents. Furthermore, these sections also encompass an industry profile, allowing us to gain valuable insights into the specific sectors our participants belong to. Lastly, we have included Empowerment statements, which aim to capture the sentiments and aspirations of our respondents. The questionnaire utilizes Likert scale inquiries, and we also assess its convergent-divergent validity, ensuring that the statistics remain within acceptable thresholds.

The study encompasses two categories of variables: Dependent Variables, which pertain to the measurement of Women empowerment, and Independent Variables, which pertain to the assessment of the opinions held by both working and Non-working women.

The completion of data analysis is achieved through the display of descriptive statistics, followed by hypothesis testing utilizing the SPSS Version 25 and AMOS R Version 23 software.

The geographical scope of our study is specifically limited to Bangalore District, located in the state of Karnataka, India.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis

There is a difference in empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District

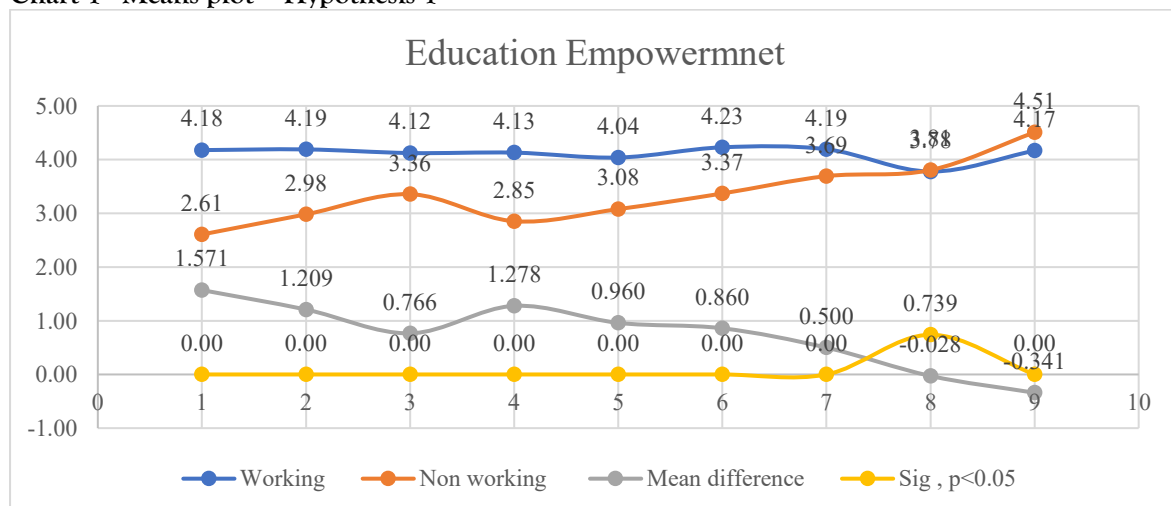
PERSONAL FACTORS

Hypothesis 1- Education empowerment

There is a difference in Education empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District

The results of the Independent t test shows that In case of Education empowerment, there is a significant difference in the opinions of working and Non-working women. F statistics of Levenes test is statistically significant at .000, Therefore the results of t-test for Equality of Means are checked and t statistics is statistically significant at $p = .000$. The following graph shows a pictorial representation of results of Independent t test.

Chart 1 - Means plot – Hypothesis 1



The Mean plots for Education empowerment items are higher (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of Nine items only the EE_8 is insignificant and can be clearly

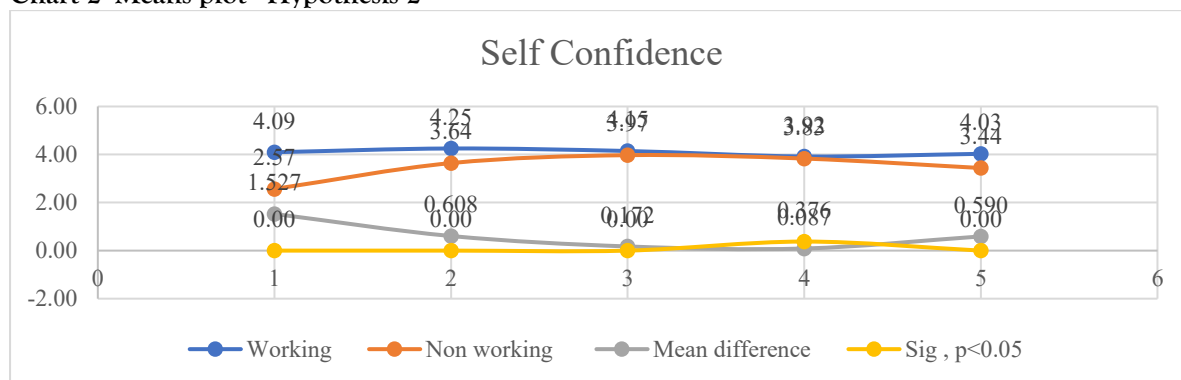
understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which EE_1 (**Development of Civic responsibility**) (1.571) followed by EE_4 (**Achieve Goal of Community development**) has the highest positive mean (1.278) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working.

The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in Education empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District, thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

Hypothesis 2 - Self Confidence

There is a difference in Self-confidence of working and non-working women in Bangalore District. The results of the Independent t test shows that In case of Self Confidence, there is a significant difference in the opinions of working and Non-working women. F statistics of Levenes test is statistically significant at .000, Therefore the results of t-test for Equality of Means are checked and t statistics is statistically significant at p = .000. The following graph shows a pictorial representation of results of Independent t test.

Chart 2- Means plot - Hypothesis 2



The Mean plots for Self Confidence items are higher (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of 5 items only the SC_4 is insignificant and can be clearly understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which SC_1 (**I feel that I am a person of worth at least on equal basis with others**) (1.527) followed by SC_5 (**I have enough knowledge on justice system**) has the highest positive mean (0.590) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working.

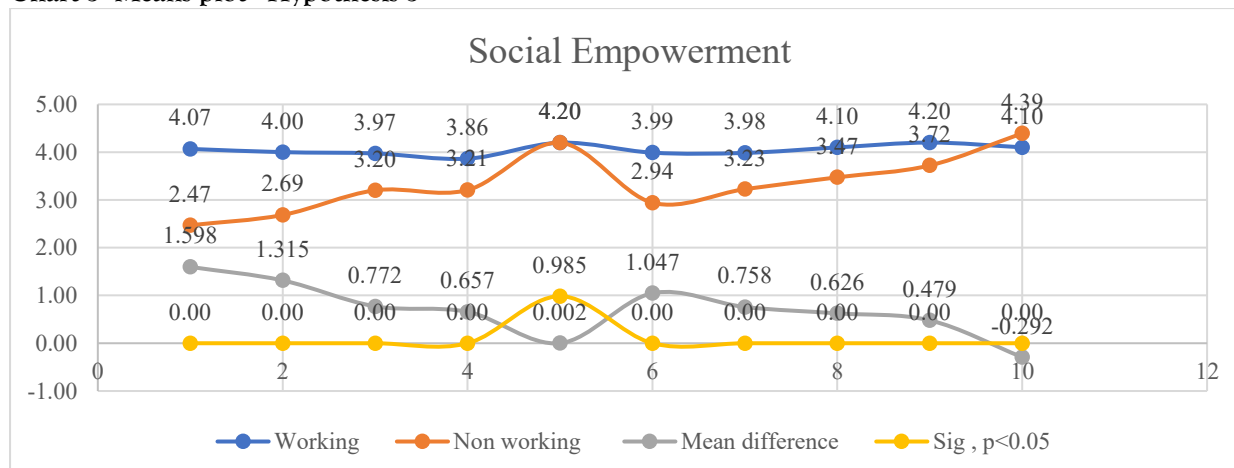
The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in Self-confidence of working and non-working women in Bangalore District, thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

RELATIONAL FACTORS

Hypothesis 3 - Social Empowerment

There is a difference in social empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District. The results of the Independent t test shows that In case of Social empowerment, there is a significant difference in the opinions of working and Non-working women. F statistics of Levenes test is statistically significant at .000, Therefore the results of t-test for Equality of Means are checked and t statistics is statistically significant at p = .000. The following graph shows a pictorial representation of results of Independent t test.

Chart 3- Means plot - Hypothesis 3



The Mean plots for Social empowerment items are higher (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of 10 items only the SOE_5 is insignificant and can be clearly understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which SOC_1 (I am able to work for social equality) (1.598) followed by SOC_2 (I am able to achieve the goal of social freedom) has the highest positive mean (1.315) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working.

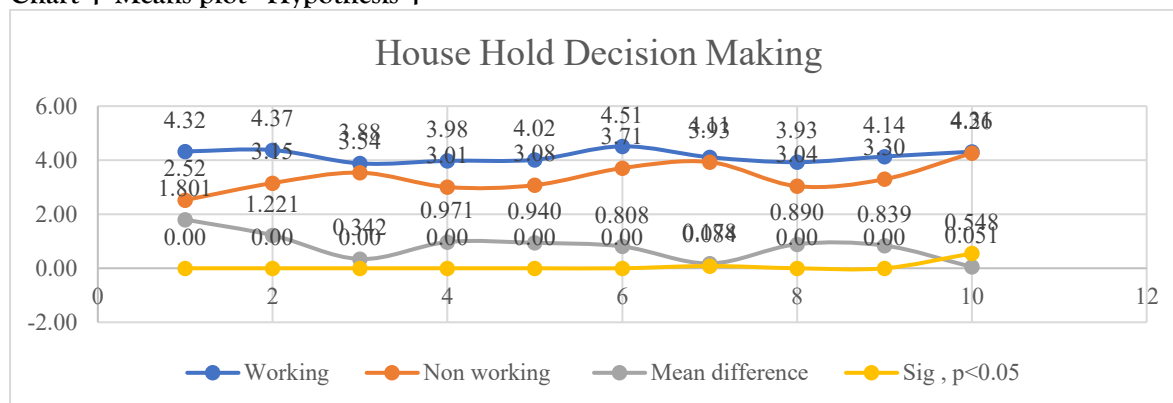
The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in Social Empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District, thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

Hypothesis 4 - House hold decision making

There is a difference in House hold decision making of working and non-working women in Bangalore District

The results of the Independent t test shows that In case of House Hold decision making, there is a significant difference in the opinions of working and Non-working women. F statistics of Levenes test is statistically significant at .000, Therefore the results of t-test for Equality of Means are checked and t statistics is statistically significant at $p = .000$. The following graph shows a pictorial representation of results of Independent t test.

Chart 4 Means plot - Hypothesis 4



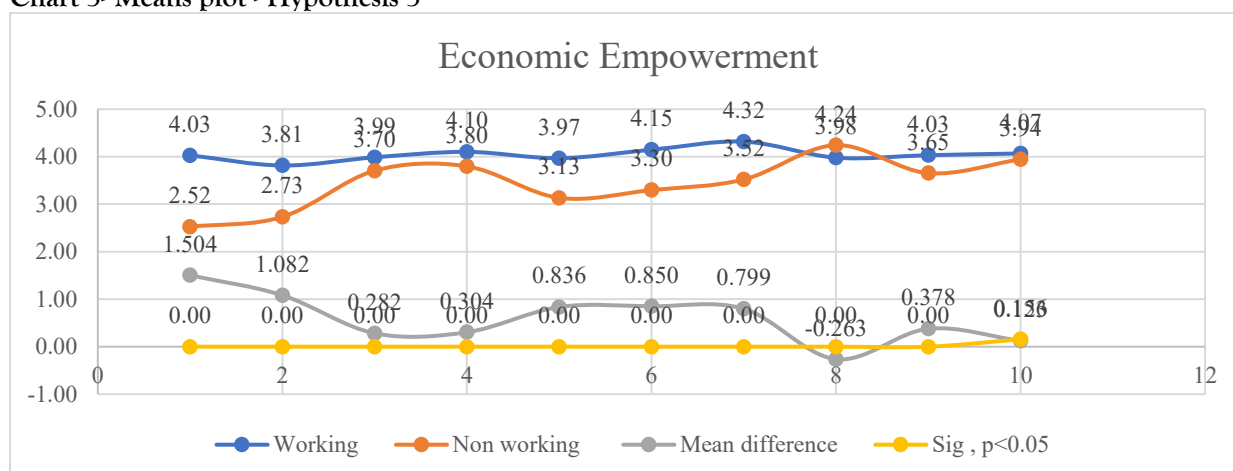
The Mean plots for House Hold Decision making items are higher (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of 10 items only the HHDM_7 and HHDM_10 are insignificant ($p>0.05$) and can be clearly understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which HHDM_1 (I am able to decide how to spend the money made from the sale of crops (household income generating activity)) (1.801) followed by HHDM_2 (I am able to decide what food to buy and consume) has the highest positive mean (1.221) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working.

The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in House hold decision making of working and non-working women in Bangalore District, thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

Hypothesis 5- Economic empowerment

There is a difference in Economic empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District

Chart 5- Means plot - Hypothesis 5



The Mean plots for Economic Empowerment items are higher (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of 10 items only the ECE_10 is insignificant and can be clearly understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which ECE_1 (I am able to achieve the goal of Agricultural and cottage industrial development) (1.504) followed by ECE_2 (I am able to gain control over their economic assets and achieve financial independence) has the highest positive mean (1.082) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working.

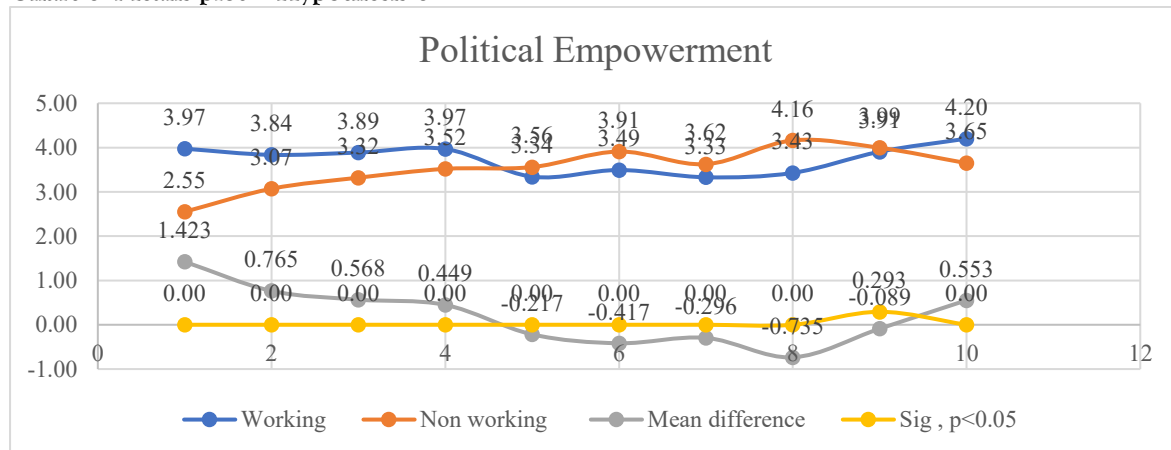
The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in Economic empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District, thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Hypothesis 6- Political Empowerment

There is a difference in Political empowerment of working and non-working women in Bangalore District

Chart 6- Means plot – Hypothesis 6



The Mean plots for Political Empowerment items are higher for first 4 items and then decline upto the ninth item (Blue line) for working women as compared to non-working women (Orange line). Out of 10 items only the EF_9 is insignificant and can be clearly understood from (Yellow line). The (Grey Line) shows the mean differences in which EF_1 (I am able to understand the activities of womens commission) (1.423) followed by EF_2 (I am able to understand the significance of adult franchise) has the highest positive mean (0.765) indicating working women have higher agreement as compared non-working. In case of EF_5, EF_6,EF_ 7,EF_8 and EF_9 the non-working women have higher political empowerment.

The results of the SEM Analysis prove that there is a difference in Political empowerment (Environmental factors) of working and non-working women in Bangalore District , thereby accepting the Alternate Hypothesis

7. CONCLUSION

There is a difference between working and non-working women in terms of empowerment. Working women tend to have higher levels of empowerment compared to non-working women. This is because employment provides women with financial independence, professional growth opportunities, and a sense of purpose. Additionally, working women often have more control over their own lives and decision-making processes, which contributes to their overall sense of empowerment. On the other hand, non-working women may face societal barriers and limited access to resources, which can hinder their empowerment. In terms of personal empowerment, working women have higher educational empowerment and self confidence levels compared to non-working women. They have the opportunity to continuously learn and develop new skills in their chosen field, allowing them to stay competitive and adaptable in the ever-changing job market. This, in turn, boosts their self-confidence and gives them a sense of achievement and fulfillment. Furthermore, working women often have more financial resources at their disposal, giving them the ability to make independent decisions and have control over their own lives. This financial freedom enables them to pursue their goals, dreams, and aspirations, ultimately leading to a higher level of personal empowerment.

In terms of relational empowerment, working women have higher household decision-making power, and economic and financial empowerment allows them to have a greater say in important family matters.

They can contribute to financial planning, investments, and major purchases, ensuring that their opinions are valued and taken into consideration. This not only strengthens their relationships within the family but also fosters a sense of equality and mutual respect. Additionally, working women often have a wider social network and exposure to diverse perspectives, which enhances their ability to navigate and negotiate various relationships effectively. In this way, their professional pursuits contribute to their overall sense of empowerment in both personal and relational domains. The working women are also political involved which empowers them to have a voice and influence in shaping policies that affect not only their own lives but also the lives of other women. By actively participating in political activities and advocating for gender equality, working women are able to challenge societal norms and break down barriers that hinder their progress. This involvement not only empowers the individual working women but also contributes to the larger movement towards gender equality and social justice. Thus, their political engagement serves as another avenue for empowerment, allowing them to make a positive impact on both their own lives and the lives of others.

8. Recommendations

- Working women have undoubtedly higher empowerment in terms of personal, relational and environmental factors. The women who are not working due to various circumstances should also be given a chance to participate in the social activities, political endeavors and be encouraged to start working in small working hours or from the convenience of the home
- If the women of the Country are empowered, definitely progress in the nation will grow in leaps and bound. Women empowerment should be the utmost priority of the Government

REFERENCES

1. Adhikari, H. (2022). Anxiety and depression: Comparative study between working and non-working mothers. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 12(2), 273-282.
2. C. K Lee, S. E., Beatty.(2002) "Family structure and influence in family decision making". *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 19 (1), 24-41
3. C.O.N Moser, (1993) "Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training". Routledge, London.
4. J. Friedmann, (1992) "Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development". Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK. 1992
5. K. Young. (1993) *Planning Development with Women: Making a World of Difference*. Macmillan, London.
6. M. A Belch and A. W.,(2002) "Laura. Family decision at the turn of the century: Has the changing structure of households impacted the family decision-making process?" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 2 (2), 111-24. 2002
7. M.H Marchand. & J.L. Parpart, (1995). *Feminism: Postmodernism Development*. Routledge, London.
8. N. Kabeer. (1999) "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on The measurement of Women's Empowerment". *Development and Change*, 30, Pp 435-464.,
9. N., Ngome, Angella,(2003) "Gender Division of Labour and Women's Decision-Making Power in Rural Households: The Case of Mbalangi, Ediki and Mabonji Villages of Meme Division", Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Buea, Department of Women and Gender Studies. 2003
10. S. Batliwala, (1995) "Education for Women's Empowerment", ASPBAE Position Paper for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, New Delhi, Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education. 1995.
11. T. Elizabeth, & Duncan, (2003), *Measuring Power*. Chapter 4. *Household Decisions: Gender and Development*. Research Report published by International Food Policy Research Institute, 2003.
12. T. Green, Robert and C.M Isabella. Cunningham, (1975), "Feminine Role Perception and Family Purchasing Decisions," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 12 (August), 325-332, 1975.
13. Z Oxaal, & S Baden, (1997) "Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy", Briefing Prepared For the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.