

# Review of: "Socio-cultural factors influencing women empowerment: A cross-sectional study among an ex-criminal tribe in West Bengal, India"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This work has the potential to make significant contribution to literature on women empowerment, moreover, it situates empowerment in socio-cultural context which has implications for policies and programmes aiming at women empowerment and or gender equality. The strength of the study lies in its unique context of tribal women, though not highlighted in the write-up. However, there exists serious flaws in the research design and conceptualization of variables, specifically, women empowerment.

An attempt has been made to measure women empowerment as a unidimensional construct, however, it is well accepted as a multi-dimensional construct (Bayissa et al., 2018). Also, indicators used to measure women empowerment range from financial indicator to relational to social, thus, it is advisable to focus on any one dimension of empowerment or measure economic empowerment, relational empowerment and/or social empowerment, separately and then, see effect of socio-cultural factors separately (using different models) on each type of empowerment. I feel, since authors are focusing on decision-making powers within household, relational empowerment would be a more precise construct to look at.

I have concerns about the methodology section. Authors are not explicit, rather confused, in stating the research methodology. At some place they mention that the approach was ethnography - "the ethnographic approach was the basic theoretical perspective", while at a later stage they mention a multi-stage sampling and cross-sectional survey was done. Such contradicting statements are not expected from researchers.

Authors have chosen age, education, working status, and SHG member or not as explanatory variables for the decision-making power. A justification for selecting only these four variables as explanatory is must. Discussion is lacking, authors need to cite latest works in similar contexts (Chaudhry et al., 2019; Batool, 2018; Singh & Babbar, 2022) and justify their results. Bring in the significance of context, that is tribal women, how is your context different from existing studies.

For improving this work, authors may look at works that have used similar decision-making indicators to construct a single variable of women empowerment (relational empowerment) (Singh and Babbar, 2022) and then regressed explanatory variables to identify significant determinants of women empowerment. It will help to strengthen the work analytically. Further, methodology section needs a re-write to ensure consistency of claims made regarding research design/ method.

Authors conclude about empowerment status, while in results section we have tables on decision-making and not on

empowerment. Authors conclude that participation in economic activity and/ or being part of SHGs is significant factor for decision-making powers for tribal women, further education is significant. Given education level and participation in economic activity, or in SHGs are highly correlated, running a single model with other explanatory variables as controls would help to find effect of each explanatory variable precisely and without bias.

A re-write of methods section and with better conceptualization of women empowerment, this work has the potential for significant contribution towards literature on women empowerment and its determinants in tribal population in India.

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