Level of Women Empowerment and It's Determinates in Selected South Asian Countries

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Abstract: *In most parts of the South Asia, women commonly have less power and empowerment in making decisions. This is associated with her ethnicity, deprivation level, urban/rural classification and education. This study based on these issues tries to find out that, what factors determines level of woman empowerment in the context of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. So, paper tries to estimate the levels and factors affecting women empowerment with a specified hypothesis. The DHS-2006-07 data on currently married women of age 15-49 years has been used for analysis. Empowerment index is generated by principal component analysis into tersely categories. Multinomial logistic regression used to see the effect of socio-economic and demographic factors on women's empowerment. Results indicate that age, education, media, occupation, marital duration and wealth power are important factors for women by whom a woman gets a position in household and family, older women have more empowered than younger. Empowerment in rural areas is much less visible than in urban. Rural women, as opposed to women in urban settings, face inequality at much higher rates, and in all spheres of life.*

Keywords: *Women Empowerment Index (WEI), Low (L), Medium (M), High (H), Principle Component Analysis (PCA), Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) Information, Education and Communication (IEC)*

I.   Introduction

The basic components of women empowerment are 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 just demographic, social and economic orders, nationally and internationally. Women's inferior position in the household and lack of negotiation power often limit communication with spouse and other family members (Salway, 2006; Dixon-Muller, 1993). Women empowerment opens the door for the women's international health movement to influence country-level policies, which seek to implement recommendations from Cairo, (Neidell, 1998).

The adoption of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific (1994), and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995), have been found a significant achievements in empowering women in the region. Promoting the greater participation of women in the decision-making process remains another major objective in several countries of the region towards the goal of empowering women (United Nation, Bangkok, 22-28 April, 1999). There are many studies in the ongoing field of women empowerment at different time period. At the various dimension of empowerment for human life mainly for female, direct indicators for women empowerment are based on decision making power, access to resources & freedom of movement and indirect indicators, for women empowerment based on education, occupation, gender role, mass-media exposure, Intra-spousal communication between husband and wife choices of contraceptive method & freedom from different type of violence.

In three South Asian countries, major decisions on health care were made without their participation. For example, the decision on own health care is not taken by three fourth women in Nepal, around half (54%) of Bangladesh and (48.5%) by Indian women. A study by (Islam et al., 2010) found that inter-spousal communication was very low in Bangladesh due to low empowerment level of women. Most of the couples did not use contraceptive by taking joint decision. A study by (DeRosem et al. 2004) found that contraceptive use was larger among couple who had discussed about family planning with each other, and for such type of activities women decision is most important. After International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, the donors and policy makers emphasized to involve men in decision making on women's reproductive health, rights and preferences. The role of women empowerment and her communication with husband in the family, is posited to sexuality, and biological reproduction as being crucial, both for the advance of knowledge and for achieving greater equity between men and women (Garcia and de Oliveira, 2001).

In male dominated society like India, Nepal and Bangladesh, men are the supreme authority in all decision making process including reproductive preference of women. In such a patriarchal setting the first step

in a rational process of decision making involves communication of women with spouse, relative and other family members. Women's place in the family hierarchy and relationships within the home combine with the socially prescribed gendered division of roles to determine their levels of exclusion in both the private (household) and public spheres. Class, caste, religion, ethnicity and location are additional factors that mediate gendered social relations across countries in varying degrees.

The research work based on Tamil Nadu, India (A.K.Ravishankar & S. Ramachandran, 2001) shows that by information, education and communication (IEC) strategy made the men participate equally with wife in decision making on various issues. Equal participation of spouses in decision making could be considered as the perceived involvement of men in promotion of reproductive and child health. A study was carried out during September-November 2011 in the Kailali district of Nepal, indicates that both increasing women's autonomy and increasing husbands' involvement in maternal health care are promising strategies to enhance maternal health care utilization (D. Kaji Thapa & Anke Niehof, 2013). A research on couple communication regarding contraceptive method choices and it's important. The success of contraceptive use depends on the agreement and cooperation of the husband and wife communication. It has a positive effect on choice of modern and traditional as well as magnitude and direction of association varied per empowerment dimension in Bangladesh (Islam, M.S. Alam & Md. M.Hasan, 2013).

Keera A. during year 2007 in a study of Nepal found that women who have own land are significantly more likely to final say in household decisions, a measure of empowerment The institutional context (family, household, state, religious, establishments, educational establishment, media and NGO, etc.) in which an individual or group residence have to affect women empowerment (Commission of women and development, 2007).Women empowerment programs focus primarily on increasing the decision-making power of women, while male involvement/couple-friendly programs emphasized communication and negotiation within couples in making decisions.

II.   Need Of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the selected issues related to women empowerment in India, Nepal and Bangladesh in three major countries of South Asia. These are very vast countries with all type of diversity across the states in terms of demographic, socio-economic characteristics and culture practices. If we see the overall development of India, Nepal and Bangladesh or in most parts of South Asia, women commonly have less power and empowerment in making decisions about their own health care, unequal access to food, education, and health care, limited opportunities to earn incomes, restricted access to, and control over, productive resources, and very few effective legal rights as compared to men. These lacks of power to take decision due to different barrier like ethnicity, deprivation level, urban/rural classification, education contribute disadvantaged for women' s opportunities and their legal rights. Their low social status has been identified as a barrier towards national health and population policy progress in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. So, this study try to attempt to identify how women empowerment play an important role between different socio-economic, demographic and culture hierarchy, and what are factors affecting women empowerment in these three countries, which is based on direct and indirect indicators of female autonomy in term of maternal, reproductive and child health.

2.1. Research question, Objective and Hypothesis
Question: What factors determines woman empowerment level in the context of India, Nepal and Bangladesh?

Objective: To study the differential in the levels and factors affecting women empowerment in the selected south Asian countries India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Hypothesis: Women's empowerment is positively associated with socio-economic and demographic characteristics of women.

III.   Source Of Data

The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data conducted during the period around 2006-2007 in India, Nepal and Bangladesh has been used for analysis. For India the data has been used National Family Health Survey-3 conducted during 2005-06 by International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, this is a large sample survey sponsored by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. For Nepal and Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey data has been used. Collected information regarding women empowerment related variable from the currently married women of age 15-49 has been used. This study focused on the association of women empowerment with socio-economic and demographic factors, and the differential in the level of women empowerment. From the available data and information study used to generate women empowerment variable from all direct and indirect indicators related to empowerment.

Country	DHS Survey Years	Currently Married Women 15-49 Years
India	2005-2006	87,925
Bangladesh	2006- 2007	10,146
Nepal	2005- 2006	8,244

IV.   Methodology And Analytical Frame Work

All the below direct and indirect indicator can be organized into specified group called as empowerment factors of women's empowerment. These factors are described by their relevant criteria which explained as,

1. A woman has freedom of movement as she is alone allowed to go-to market, to take the health facility & to go places outside their village or/and community.
2. A woman has decision making power as she finally says on making the decision for small/large household's purchases, resource allocation and financial decision on daily needs and deciding what to do with money earned by their husband/household income.
3. A woman has access of resources as she has any money of her own that she alone can decide how to use, whether she has a bank/savings account and she given a loan program.
4. A woman believes that it is not justify to the husband to beat him if she goes outside without telling to husband, neglects the children, unfaithful, disrespectful to in-laws, argues with him or refuses to have sex with him.
5. A woman believes that it is right to refusing her husband sex if either she knows her husband has sexually transmitted diseases, her husband has sex with other woman or she is tired or not in the mood.
6. A woman is employed in any field (professional, technical, clerical, salesman, agriculture-employee, private/government services, skilled/unskilled worker, etc) and having decision how to spend money earning from her which is earned either in the form of cash or in the form of a kind.
7. A woman is never experienced any emotional, severe and sexual violence.

4.1. Principal Components Analysis

This is used to generate a women empowerment index by above mention indicators. In principal components analysis (PCA) and factor analysis (FA) one wishes to extract from a set of p variables a reduced set of m components or factors that accounts for most of the variance in the p variables. In other words, we wish to reduce a set of p variables to a set of m underlying super ordinate dimensions. These underlying factors are inferred from the correlations among the p variables. Each factor is estimated as a weighted sum of the p variables. The ith factor is thus

$$F_i = W_{i1}X_1 + W_{i2}X_2 + \ldots + W_{ip}X_p$$

One may also express each of the p variables as a linear combination of the m factors,

$$X_j = A_{1j}F_1 + A_{2j}F_2 + \ldots + A_{mj}F_m + U_j$$

Where U_j is the variance that is unique to variable j, variance that cannot be explained by any of the common factors. W_{ip} is the weight for m[th] principal component and P[th] variables.

4.2. Multinomial Logistic Model

Multinomial logistic regression (MLR) models are used to see the effect of background characteristics on women empowerment. The effect of socio-economic, demographic and health-related variables is examined on multiple response category variables. The basic assumption of multinomial logistic regression model is that the categories of the response variable should be mutually exclusive. The following multinomial logistic regression model has been used in this study.

$Z_1 = \text{Log} (P_1/P_3) = a_1 + \Sigma b_{1j}*X_j$

$Z_2 = \text{Log} (P_2/P_3) = a_2 + \Sigma b_{2j}*X_j$

and $P_1 + P_2 + P_3 = 1$

Where $a_{i,i} = 1,2$: constants

bij i=1,2; j=1,2,….n : multinomial regression coefficient.

P1: Estimated probability of women age 15-49 fall in Low tertile of empowerment

P2: Estimated probability of women age 15-49 fall in Medium tertile of empowerment

P3: Estimated probability of women age 15-49 fall in High tertile of empowerment

Here, P_1 is the reference category

4.3. Use of variables for analysis purpose
- **Dependent variables:** women empowerment Index (WEI) specified by low (L), medium (M) and high (H) tertile group of women empowerment
- **Independent variables:** Age of women, age of husband, age difference between spouse, residence, wealth quintile, religion, age at marriage, education of women, education of husband, women occupation, type of money earn, number of living children and media exposure

4.4. Use of data analysis tools

The analysis has been done through SPSS, STATA, and Excel software. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been used to generated women's empowerment index which is a method of Factor analysis, and it is categorize into three tersely categories low (L), medium (M) and high (H) tertile. Bi-variate analysis used to see the association and Multinomial logistic Regression used to see the effect of selected socio-economic and demographic factors on women's empowerment. Other kind of study also used this kind of several techniques for study of women empowerment.
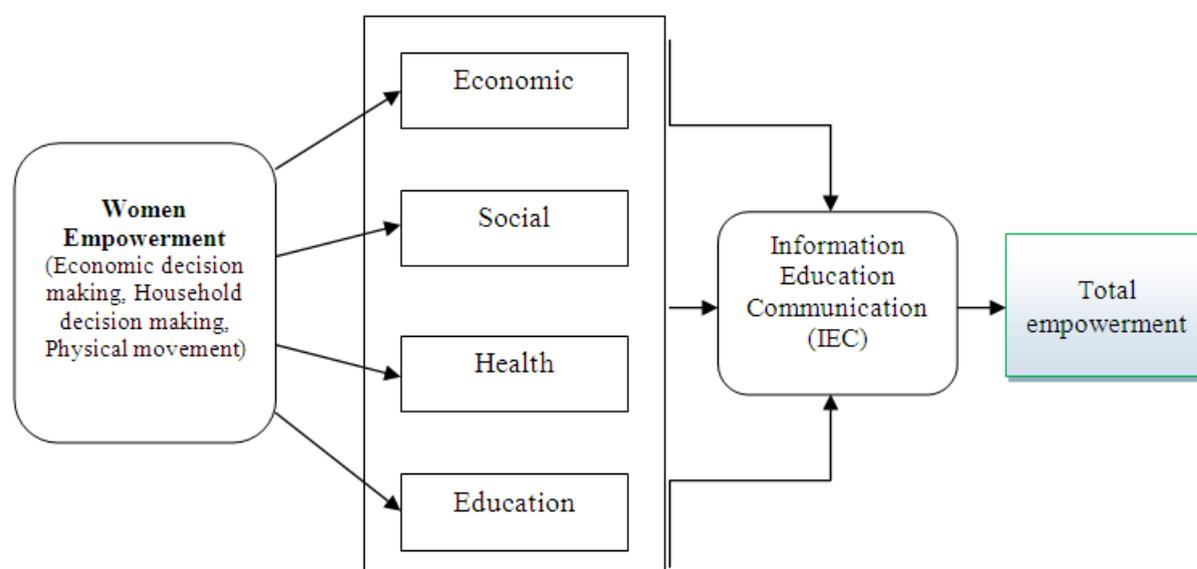

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for women empowerment associated with socio-economic and demographic factors.

V. Results And Discussion

Results of the study are focusing a comparative level analysis of empowerment's level and effect of selected socio-economic and demographic factors on the women empowerment in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

5.1. Distribution of women according to socio-economic and demographic characteristics

Table-1 represents the percentage distribution of women in these three countries according to their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The nearly, 40 percent of women falling according to age in 20 to 29 years age group in all these three countries. The distribution of husband is fewer in these intervals as compared to women because generally men are more aged than women. In the age group difference 1 to 5 years, nearly 52 percent, 57 percent and 23 percent and 6 to 10 years age difference it is 32 percent, 21 percent and 43 percent respondent falls in India, Nepal in Bangladesh respectively, in Bangladesh proportion in high may be due to remarriage. The rural respondent is more than twice time as compared to urban in India, one sixth times in Nepal and more than two third in Bangladesh. So, in these all three countries most of respondents are from rural areas.

The distribution of respondents with wealth quintile group is nearly similar with the notable exception that the proportion of respondents who are poorest, poorer, middle, richer and richest follow similar pattern, the large proportion of respondent falls in the poorer, middle and richer categories in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The proportion of respondent who belong in major religion category is high in all countries, Hindu is in India around 81 percent and 86 percent in Nepal and 91 percent Muslim respondent in Bangladesh.The proportion of respondent are decreasing by increasing the level of their education most of the respondent have the primary and secondary level of education in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Women belong in higher educational level nearly 6 percent in India, 3 percent in Nepal and more than six percent in Bangladesh. The education of husband illustrates the progress in the spread of education over a period of about three decades. More than one fourth percent of respondent belong in India; Nepal and one third percent belongs in Bangladesh.

A significant feature of women's work participation in India Nepal and Bangladesh is their substantial contribution to family earnings. Majority of respondent who did not work is more than 42, 16 and 67 percent in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Large proportion of respondent share their contribution in marital duration group 15 years & above, nearly 45, 43 and 46 percent respondents are falling in this duration in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Nearly one fourth of respondent fall in India and Nepal in not paid money earn group and only 13.6 percent in Bangladesh. Large proportion of respondent is with more than 1 to 4 children. In India two-third of women are regularly exposed to any mass media. As expected, regular exposure to any media is widespread among Nepalese i.e. 69 percent women have exposed to media and more than 54 percent women in Bangladesh.

5.2. Level of women's empowerment with background characteristics and effect of women's background characteristics on women's empowerment

The index of women empowerment is distributed in the three categories by low, medium and high and the women with age 15-49 falls in these three categories by selected background characteristics. **Table-2** shows the distribution of empowerment with background characteristics of women, and all three table **Table-3, 4 and 5** are the result of multinomial logistic regression which are showing the effect of background on the women empowerment respectively in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Women with less than 20 years age group falls in large proportion in low tertile group of empowerment. This proration is increasing by increasing the age of women and it is also large in higher age's group with high tertile. Similar results are found for others background characteristics of respondent i.e. those women have low socio-economic and demographic profile they are falling most of the low tertile group and it's provide a just inverse results means high proportion of women in high tertile group which have better status by socio -economic and demographically. Age of women and her husband has a positive effect on empowerment moving from low into medium and high empowerment tertile category in India and Nepal. But in case of Bangladesh age of husband does not playing any role on women's empowerment.

Urban proportion is high in urban areas in medium and high tertile group of empowerment, this indicate that urbanization has a significant effect on empowerment, which means that by the urbanization women can get a better stage for develop himself and aware about role of empowerment because urban women have educated more and know about all law and rights to take decision in any matters more as compared to our counterparts. age difference does not playing any crucial role for empowerment except only for India when spouses have most of similar age and Nepal when age difference is more than eleven years have significant effect on women's empowerment. Only in this age difference groups have positive effect on high empowerment tertile.

Women empowerment has an inverse relationship with wealth categories of women. The percentage distribution is high in low and medium tertile group of empowerment those women which are in poorer, poorest and middle wealth categories and in those women which are in high empowerment group and is richer or richest. This proportion is large in poorest, poorer and middle wealth group with low and medium tertile group in India and Bangladesh. In case of Nepal most of the women are in middle wealth category. The wealth capacities of the women have positive effect on women empowerment in India but it is not showing any significant effect in Bangladesh. Women belong to middle and richer wealth category has a positive effect on medium and high tertile group of empowerment respectively in Nepal. In Bangladesh the richest wealth quintile has positive effect on high tertile group of empowerment.

Women falls in a large proportion in low and medium tertile group of empowerment who have no schooling and or at primary level schooling. Women with secondary and highest level of schooling falls in high tertile group of empowerment. Regression model value shows that education has a positive effect on empowerment in India and Nepal. In case of Bangladesh only higher level of education has positive effect on empowerment in both cases of husband and wife with medium and high tertile group.

The distribution of women empowerment by religion wise almost same in both major and other religion group in all these three countries. Religion has does not any significant effect on empowerment in Nepal and Bangladesh. This percentage is high in medium tertile in India and Bangladesh in other religious group. It is high in major religious group in high tertile of empowerment in Nepal. Other religion groups have positive effects on women empowerment in Nepal.

The percentage distribution of women is increasing with increasing the marital duration of spouse that is those women who have spend more year of marital duration they are most found in high empowered group. So, marital duration has a positive effect on women's empowerment, but it is highly significant in high tertile group. It is most important factors because older women will be more aware about our family, society and community. So, woman's marital duration is the most significant predictor of women empowerment.

The proportion of women is high in low tertile group of empowerment those women who have no child experience and these proportion decreasing with increasing number of children. When the number of children is increasing it is also increasing in medium and high tertile group. It has a positive effect when women have 1-2 or more child in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Media is playing crucial role in case of India and Bangladesh, i.e. those women who have exposed to any mass media are generally more empowered as compared to their counter parts. Media exposure has an insignificant role in Nepal and significant effect in India and Bangladesh.

VI.   Summary And Conclusion

Women empowerment is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (religion), age, wealth power, media, and age difference between spouse, marital duration, occupation and number of living children. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. Religious and cultural experiences play significant roles in shaping women's empowerment in all countries. In this context, the selection of these countries is interesting because of the sheer diverse religious and cultural experiences in these regions influence on women and power to take decision. The predominant religions are as follows: Nepal and India: Hinduism; Bangladesh: Islam.

Women get a position in household and family because older women have more empowered as compared to younger women. So, Women's age is an important factor in all these countries. Urban women and, in particular, urban educated women enjoy relatively higher access to economic opportunities, health and education and experience less domestic violence. Women (both urban and rural) with education have higher chance of decision making in the household and the community. Women with more years of marital duration are much more likely to spend their various efforts, workforce participation and income on their own needs, age at marriage in Nepal and Bangladesh remains unusually low as compared to India. So, it has an impact on empowerment in Nepal and Bangladesh more as compared to India.

Education has a significant and positive role on empowerment. It is found that women who have attained secondary or higher education are more empowered as compared to uneducated women. This result supports us to strengthen pathways to women's education and also supports the proposition that educated women are more likely to marry later and also more likely to have higher agency in their lives. Women who work for cash have high empowered as compared to those who have not participate any kind of work.

Those women who has economically strong takes decision regarding any life courses like money spend for health matters, make household purchases, spend money for own need. Early marriage among females typically results in large age differences between spouses because male age at marriage is considerably higher. So, due to this reason age difference does not much play satisfactory role for women's empowerment in few years of marriage.

Women from Islamic faith have lower probabilities of being empowered in Bangladesh. In this connection, the media has a very important role in portraying the woman to an average viewer. More attention on promoting working women images through dramas, advertisements, interviews and feature films is recommended. Media is playing crucial role in India and Bangladesh, i.e. those women who have exposed to any mass media are generally more empowered as compared to their counter parts. It does not playing any significant role in Nepal.

Women with more number of children has much chance to empowered, due to increases number of children women more supported to provide education for children, discuses husband about desire number of children and other matters for desire family size. Overall conclusion of study is that, all direct or indirect factors are responsible to improve the condition of women and to become women empowered. Indian women are more empowered as compared to Nepalese women and Nepalese women are in much better position as compared to Bangladeshi women. But there are need to provide support, education, better environment for development of women and encourage them for communication with family member more about all matters to take decision and also from outside family members for about laws and rights. So, by information, education and communication process women can get a better life, which are necessary for her health and healthy life.

VII.   Limitation

The limitation of this study is that, culture factors are influencing at different strata of women in these three countries which is invisible and cannot control by any model. Only these estimated value provide by model is based on the available information related to socio-economic and demographic characteristics of

women. There are also several types of variation due to human behaviour at the ground level within countries which cannot be study and interpret without information and by data.

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Table-1: Distribution of currently married women age 15-49 years by selected background characteristics of women in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, 2006			
	India	Nepal	Bangladesh
Background Characteristics	**N=87,925**	**N=8,244**	**N=10,146**
Age of Wife			
<20 years	7.2	9.5	13.5
20-24 years	18.0	19.4	20.5
25-29 years	19.9	20.1	18.2
30years & above	54.9	50.9	47.7
Age of Husband			
<24 years	7.7	15.2	6.1
25-29 years	15.2	18.9	14.1
30years & above	77.1	65.9	79.8
Age Difference between spouse			
0 years	4.8	13.7	0.9
1-5 years	51.9	57.2	23.1
6-10 years	32.4	21.4	43.7
10 years & above	10.9	7.7	32.3
Residence			
Rural	69.3	85.2	77.6
Urban	30.7	14.8	22.4
Wealth Index			
Poorest	18.7	18.6	18.7
Poorer	19.9	19.9	19.6
Middle	20.1	21.2	20.2
Richer	20.4	19.9	21.0
Richest	21.0	20.5	20.6
Religion			
Major	81.4	85.9	90.8
Others	18.6	14.1	9.2
Age at Marriage			
< 18 years	71.4	77.4	89.8
>18years & above	28.6	22.6	10.2
Women Education			
No Education	47.2	61.9	32.2
Primary	15.4	17.0	30.0
Secondary	31.5	18.4	31.6
Higher	5.9	2.7	6.2
Husband Education			
No Education	27.3	25.5	34.6
Primary	16.1	27.7	26.7
Secondary	45.0	38.4	26.2
Higher	11.6	8.4	12.5
Women Occupation			
Working	57.3	83.3	33.3
Not-working	42.7	16.7	66.7
Marital Duration			
0-4 years	18.2	20.1	19.0
5-9 years	19.7	19.5	18.9
10-14 years	17.5	17.4	16.3
15 years & above	44.6	42.9	45.8
Money Earn			
Paid	75.9	76.6	86.4
Not-paid	24.1	23.4	13.6
Number of Living children			
0	10.9	10.4	10.7
1-2	44.0	40.7	46.8
3-4	33.4	34.3	30.8
5+	11.7	14.6	11.7
Media Exposure			
Yes	62.1	68.7	54.3
No	37.9	31.3	45.7

Note:
- *Data source: Demographic and Health Survey conducted during 2006-2007.*
- *N is the total number of currently women age 15-49 years eligible of this study*
- *Background characteristics of women have been taken same for all given below tables.*

Table-2: Distribution of Women by Empowerment Tertile by Selected Background Characteristics in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, 2006								
Background Characteristics	**India**			**Nepal**			**Bangladesh**		
	L	**M**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**H**
Age of Wife									
<20 years	64.2	24.1	11.7	73.3	19.1	7.7	47.8	32.5	19.6
20-24 years	47.2	31.4	21.4	49.9	29.7	20.4	35.1	33.1	31.7
25-29 years	33.5	35.1	31.5	34	33.1	33	31.7	34.5	33.8
30years & above	24.2	35.1	40.7	17.4	38.1	44.5	29.1	33.6	37.3
Age of Husband									
<20 years	71.7	21.3	7.1	87	11.2	1.8	62.3	17	20.7
20-24 years	61.9	25.4	12.7	64.4	23.2	12.4	46.1	33.1	20.8
25-29 years	46.3	31.8	21.9	45	31.4	23.6	38.8	33.1	28.1
30years & above	27.5	34.9	37.7	20.5	37.2	42.4	31.3	33.7	35
Age Difference									
<0 years	33.2	34.1	32.8	40.7	30.6	28.7	15.2	32.1	52.6
0 years	30.1	34.4	35.5	34.9	30.7	34.4	35.5	22.8	41.7
1-5 years	34.2	33.4	32.4	33.8	33.1	33.1	32.4	33.3	34.3
6-10 years	31.8	34	34.2	29.3	36.4	34.3	32.9	34.4	32.7
11 years & above	31.7	33.6	34.8	20.4	35.4	44.2	34.7	32.7	32.6
Residence									
Rural	37.4	33.9	28.7	34.6	31.4	34	35.2	33.7	31.1
Urban	23.3	33	43.8	19.5	46.5	34	27.1	32.7	40.2
Wealth Index									
Poorest	36.3	34	29.7	32.8	30.8	36.4	33.3	34.6	32.1
Poorer	37.7	34.2	28.1	33.3	28.8	37.9	36.9	33.1	30
Middle	36.9	33.5	29.6	40.5	28.6	30.9	38.1	32.4	29.5
Richer	32.5	34.3	33.2	34.1	34.7	31.2	33.7	34.4	31.9
Richest	22.5	32.3	45.1	20.9	45.1	34	25	33.1	41.9
Religion									
Major	33.2	33.5	33.3	32.6	33.7	33.7	33.7	33.2	33.1
Others	32.5	34.3	33.2	30.8	33.2	36	29.6	36.7	33.7
Age at Marriage									
< 18 years	35	34	31	33.1	32.4	34.6	34	33.9	32.1
19-24 years	29.5	33.1	37.4	30.4	38.1	31.5	29.3	29.9	40.8
25 years & above	19.3	28.8	51.9	25.1	37.1	37.8	10.8	35.1	54.1
Women Education									
No Education	35.8	34.2	30	30.7	32.1	37.1	33.8	33.3	32.9
Primary	35.2	34.2	30.6	37.3	31.6	31.1	34	34.8	31.2
Secondary	31.3	33.3	35.5	34.8	38.7	26.6	35.7	33	31.2
Higher	15.5	29.2	55.3	21.5	47	31.5	15.9	31	53.1
Husband Education									
No Education	34	34.7	31.4	26.3	31.2	42.5	33.8	33.8	32.4
Primary	34	34.2	31.8	33	31.3	35.7	36.4	34	29.5
Secondary	34.4	33.5	32.1	37.2	34.2	28.6	34.9	33.1	32
Higher	24.4	30.8	44.8	26.4	45.9	27.7	22.4	32.4	45.2
Women Occupation									
Working	30.1	31.9	37.9	31.6	31.3	37.1	37	32.7	30.3
Not-working	35.2	34.9	29.9	36.2	45.4	18.4	26	35.2	38.8
Marital Duration									
0-4 years	52.4	28.7	18.8	62.7	25.9	11.4	44.4	32.1	23.5
5-9 years	37.6	32.6	29.9	37.8	33.2	29	33	33.1	33.8
10-14 years	29.6	35.4	35.4	31	33.3	35.7	30.4	34.5	35.1
15 years & above	24.7	35.4	39.9	16.2	37.6	46.2	29.9	33.9	36.2
Number of Living children									
0	52.3	28.1	19.7	66.6	21.8	11.6	43.5	32.1	24.4
1-2	33.4	32.6	34	37	34.7	28.3	31.9	33.1	35
3-4	28.4	35.8	35.8	21.9	34.7	43.4	31.1	34.2	34.7
5+	27	36.5	36.5	19.4	36.6	44	35.8	34.7	29.5
Media Exposure									
Yes	29.4	33.8	36.8	32.2	34.8	32.9	30.1	33.5	36.4
No	39	33.4	27.6	32.6	31	36.4	37.2	33.5	29.2
Total	**33.1**	**33.6**	**33.3**	**33.4**	**33.4**	**33.2**	**33.4**	**33.5**	**33.1**

Table-3: Effects of socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the probability of women empowerment, stratified by Medium and High status, India-2006			
	Women empowerment Tertile		
Background Characteristics	**Low®**	**Medium**	**High**
Age of Wife			
<20 years®	58.8	26.8	14.4
20-24 years	41.9	32.8***	25.3***
25-29 years	28.8	34.6***	36.6***
30years & above	20.2	33.3***	46.5***
Age of Husband			
<20 years®	64.7	23.5	11.8
20-24 years	54.2	28.6	17.2
25-29 years	39.9	33.0**	27.1**
30years & above	23.2	33.5**	43.3**
Age Difference between spouse			
0 years®	25.7	32.7	41.6
<0 years	22.2	33.4	44.4**
1-5 years	28.5	33.0	38.5
6-10 years	27.2	33.3	39.5
11 years & above	27.0	33.0	40.0
Residence			
Urban®	20.4	31.8	78.4
Rural	33.2	34.1***	32.6***
Wealth Index			
Poorest®	34.5	34.2	31.3
Poorer	34.4	34.5***	31.1***
Middle	31.5	33.8***	34.7***
Richer	27.0	33.9***	39.1***
Richest	19.2	30.7***	50.1***
Religion			
Major®	28.7	32.8	38.5
Others	24.6	33.9***	41.5***
Age at Marriage			
< 18 years®	30.7	33.9	35.5
19-24 years	24.1	32.4*	43.5***
25 years & above	15.7	29.2**	55.1***
Women Education			
No Education®	32.5	34.0	33.5
Primary	29.3	34.6***	36.2***
Secondary	25.4	33.2***	41.4***
Higher	12.9	26.3***	60.8***
Husband Education			
No Education®	31.1	34.3	34.6
Primary	28.8	34.2*	37.0*
Secondary	28.3	33.4	38.2**
Higher	18.7	29.0	52.3
Women Occupation			
Not-working®	29.7	34.6	35.7
Working	24.5	30.9***	44.7***
Marital Duration			
0-4 years®	43.0	31.4	25.5
5-9 years	30.8	32.6***	36.6***
10-14 years	24.2	33.8***	42.0***
15 years & above	21.0	33.8***	45.2***
Number of Living children			
0®	44.4	30.5	25.1
1-2	27.0	32.2***	40.7***
3-4	24.4	34.5***	41.2***
5+	24.0	35.1***	41.0***
Media Exposure			
No®	36.3	33.6	30.1
Yes	24.2	32.9***	42.9***

® is reference category, P ≤ 0.05, P** ≤ 0.01 P*** ≤ 0.001*

Table-4: Effects of socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the probability of women empowerment, stratified by Medium and High status, Nepal-2006.			
	Women empowerment Tertile		
Background Characteristics	**Low®**	**Medium**	**High**
Age of Wife			
<20 years®	74.3	18.1	7.6
20-24 years	50.5	30.6**	18.9
25-29 years	34.5	33.4**	32.2**
30years & above	18.5	37.4***	44.1***
Age of Husband			
<20 years®	82.5	14.6	2.8
20-24 years	64.9	22.9	12.2*
25-29 years	46.2	31.0	22.8**
30years & above	21.5	36.9*	41.6***
Age Difference between spouse			
0 years®	34.4	32.6	33.0
<0 years	38.7	31.1	30.2
1-5 years	35.2	32.5	32.4
6-10 years	31.3	35.3	33.4
11 years & above	21.6	37.0*	41.5*
Residence			
Urban®	25.6	42.9	31.5
Rural	36.2	29.9***	33.9***
Wealth Index			
Poorest ®	34.6	28.1	37.1
Poorer	34.1	28.9*	37.0
Middle	40.5	28.9**	30.6***
Richer	34.1	36.2*	29.6***
Richest	24.2	44.2	31.6
Religion			
Major®	33.7	33.4	32.9
Others	31.4	33.0	35.6*
Age at Marriage			
< 18 years®	34.0	32.4	33.6
19-24 years	32.1	36.5	31.3
25 years & above	24.6	38.0	37.4
Women Education			
No Education®	31.5	31.8	36.7
Primary	37.8	32.2***	30.0***
Secondary	37.6	37.1***	25.3***
Higher	22.0	49.0***	29.0***
Husband Education			
No Education®	26.7	32.0	41.3
Primary	33.9	30.8*	35.3
Secondary	38.5	33.4	28.2***
Higher	28.5	44.6	26.8***
Women Occupation			
Not-working®	36.1	45.8	18.0
Working	32.9	30.9***	36.2***
Marital Duration			
0-4 years®	64.1	24.9	11.0
5-9 years	39.3	33.6**	27.1***
10-14 years	30.2	33.4*	36.4***
15 years & above	17.4	37.3***	45.4***
Number of Living children			
0®	66.6	22.2	11.2
1-2	38.2	33.9***	27.9***
3-4	23.0	34.9**	42.0***
5+	20.7	36.2	43.1
Media Exposure			
No®	34.7	29.7	35.7
Yes	32.8	35.0	32.1

® *is reference category, **P* ≤ 0.05, P** ≤ 0.01 P*** ≤ 0.001***

Background Characteristics	Women empowerment Tertile		
	Low®	**Medium**	**High**
Table 5: Effects of socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the probability of women empowerment, stratified by Medium and High status, Bangladesh-2006.			
Age of Wife			
<20 years®	48.8	30.8	20.5
20-24 years	37.1	32.4	30.5*
25-29 years	31.8	33.8	34.3*
30years & above	29.9	32.2	37.9**
Age of Husband			
<20 years®	65	15	20
20-24 years	46.4	31.7	22.0
25-29 years	39.4	32.5	28.1
30years & above	32.4	32.4	35.2
Age Difference between spouse			
0 years®	33.3	28.4	38.3
<0 years	25.9	29.6	44.4
1-5 years	32.9	32.3	34.8
6-10 years	33.4	32.9	33.6
11 years & above	36.0	31.7	32.3
Residence			
Urban®	28.3	31.9	39.7
Rural	37.6	32.6*	29.8**
Wealth Index			
Poorest®	37.3	32.6	30.4
Poorer	39.9	31.5	28.6
Middle	39.9	31.1	28.9
Richer	34.2	33.9	31.9
Richest	24.3	32.4	43.3**
Religion			
Major®	34.3	32.1	33.5
Others	32.4	34.6	33.1
Age at Marriage			
< 18 years®	35.1	32.6	32.3
19-24 years	28.9	30.1	40.9
25 years & above	14.2	34.8	51.1
Women Education			
No Education®	36.2	31.6	32.1
Primary	36.0	33.0	31.0
Secondary	35.5	32.4	32.1
Higher	14.6	32.4***	53.1***
Husband Education			
No Education®	36.0	32.3	31.6
Primary	38.0	32.8	29.2
Secondary	35.9	31.6	32.5
Higher	20.2	33.0**	46.8**
Women Occupation			
Not-working®	37.7	32.0	30.3
Working	26.0	33.1***	40.9***
Marital Duration			
0-4 years®	44.6	31.2	24.2
5-9 years	33.8	32.7*	33.5***
10-14 years	31.5	32.8*	35.6***
15 years & above	30.8	32.5*	36.7***
Number of Living children			
0®	44.8	30.5	24.7
1-2	31.8	32.4*	35.8***
3-4	32.4	32.6	34.9
5+	37.9	33.2	28.9
Media Exposure			
No®	40.5	31.5	28.0
Yes	29.2	33.0***	37.8***

® is reference category, **P* ≤ 0.05, P** ≤ 0.01 P*** ≤ 0.001**