Control over Resources: A Gender Perspective

Suchitra S Kumar[1]

Section I: Background

The term "Access" is to be understood as an individual's ability get to and use a particular resource. The term "Control over resources" is, likewise, is to be understood not merely in terms of the freedom to use a particular resource but also in terms of the decision making capabilities of the individual in relation to that resource. Thus "access" and "control over resources" give an individual a sense of security in possessing a resource.

"Gender", in this context, would include the various culture-specific aspects. These aspects include the rights, responsibilities, power, and authority that an individual enjoys in society. In all societies these aspects are clearly demarcated differently for men and women. Men and women have different degrees of access and control over resources and the freedom to make decisions. In most societies, however, women's access and control over resources are limited in comparison to men's. Control over productive resources such as land, equipment and housing is crucial to basic security. While poverty and precariousness are characteristic of poor men as well as women, traditional gender-based subordination deprives almost all women,

[1] Dr. Suchitra S Kumar Department of Economics, G N Khalsa College, Matunga[1]Email: suchitraskumar@gmail.com, This empirical study was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Neeraj Hatekar, Department of Economics, University Of Mumbai. The author owes her thanks to him.

regardless of class, and across communities, of control over assets, making them extremely vulnerable (Anita Gurumurthy, 1998).

Section I of this paper discusses the background used for this study. Section II discusses the test procedure used in the model, empirical results achieved through its analysis and Section III discusses the conclusion of this paper.

The literature concerning whether women have access and control over resources; and whether control over resources would make a difference to the status of women in the society is detailed in this section.

The distinction between men and women in the Indian context is largely influenced by the access to resources available to both. It is the gender differentials in adults' access to economic resources that appear as a relevant explanation of gender discrimination at the child level, which finally leads to gender discrimination at the adult level. As a result of their differential positioning in society, women are usually poorer than men, and are often economically dependent on men (Bennett (1992)).

The low status of women reduces their control on resource allocation and decision making within the household. Women's inferior position in family and society leads to the undervaluation of their time and as a consequence leads to the underinvestment in their health (Haddad (1999)).

The position and status of women depends greatly on their ability to make decisions, and an ability to understand their potential. Such ability depends on a series of factors such as resource-use, ownership, control, legal and ideological structures, and education and information. They are unable to influence decisions on the desired size of the family, health care for their children and the quantity and quality of food to be fed to children. Women's control over the resources is more likely to skew the resources towards the production of nutrition. When women control income a higher proportion of that income is spent on food and other inputs that improve health. The extent of women's independence is assessed with respect to her control over finance, decision-making power and the extent of freedom of movement. In majority of societies women are less active and vocal members in public life than are their brothers and husbands. So decisions taken even in presumably democratic surroundings can still lack considerations that take into account the needs and demands of women (Haddad (1999); Chen *et al* (1981); Herz (1989); Levine *et al* (2001)).

Section II : Test procedure:

The purpose of this analysis is to find out whether there exists, if at all, any difference in the deprivation levels between the female head of the households and male head of the households.

This study is based on the survey conducted by K. Srinivasan and S. K. Mohanty (2004) which is gender-nonspecific. Hence an attempt is made to incorporate Gender into this analysis to estimate the level of deprivation based on the possessions at the household level of some basic social and physical amenities of life using the data from the National Family and Health Survey-2 (NFHS – 2). The NFHS-2 data helps in facilitating comparison across the twenty-six states across different caste, religion and place of residence. The analysis is based on the proposition that any family to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty and indebtednesses requires at least three of the six necessities of a family. The six amenities are: (i) whether there is at least one literate member in the household; (ii) whether the house household has a 'pucca' house in the urban area and a 'pucca' or 'semi-pucca' house in the rural area; (iii) whether the household has a in the urban areas has a toilet facility and in the rural area possesses some land; (iv) whether the household has electricity; (v) whether the household has a radio/transistor/bicycle/television; and (vi) whether the household has drinking water facility within his/her residence. The possessions of the social and physical amenities are considered as the dividing line of different deprivation levels. That is, a house reflects a particular standard of living. Also the respondent could forget his/her consumption expenditures over the month, but he/she would make no error in identifying his basic possessions. A household that possessed none of the necessities was classified as Abject Deprivation, with one or two of the necessities as household with Moderate Deprivation, with three or four of the necessities as household with Just Above Deprivation, and with five or six of the necessities as household with Well Above Deprivation.

Data and Method of the Analysis:

The data used for the study is taken from the National Family Health Survey –II(NFHS-2). NFHS-2 covered a sample of 92,486 households from twenty-six Indian states. The data as conducted in 1998-99 excludes the newly formed three states.

For each household the presence of the amenity is given the score of 1 and its absence is given the score of 0. The presence of a literate member in the household would make a difference in determining the standard of living for the household. If

there exists an adult literate member in the household a score of 1 is given and or else 0. Similarly for the presence of other amenities like electricity is assigned a score of 1 and 0 otherwise. The presence of either the radio/television/bicycle/transistor in the house is assigned a score of 1 or else 0. The presence of drinking water arrangement within the household is assigned a score of 1 or else 0. If the house is a pucca or semi-pucca house then it is assigned the score of 1 or else 0. If the house has toilet facility a score of 1 is given or else a score of 0. Accordingly, if the house possesses land then the score of 1 is assigned or else a score of 0 is assigned. The five variables, which are the same for rural and urban, are electricity, radio/television/bicycle/transistor, and drinking water arrangement within the household, adult literacy and type of house. The sixth variable for the urban areas is having toilet facility whereas for the rural areas is possession of land.

The data is segregated on the basis of Caste (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and others), Religion (Hindu, Muslim and others), and Place of Residence (Urban/Rural) for each deprivation level under Male head of the households and Female head of the households. Fifteen tables are tabulated such as Rural Caste (Scheduled Caste), Rural Caste (Scheduled Tribe), Rural Caste (Others), Urban Caste (Scheduled Caste), Urban Caste (Scheduled Tribe), Urban Caste (Others), Rural Religion (Hindu), Rural Religion (Muslim), Rural Religion (Others), Urban Religion (Hindu), Urban Religion (Muslim), Urban Religion (Others), Urban (Total), Rural (Total), Sex of the household head (Total). Each table is divided into Female as well Male head of the households for twenty-six states in India, percentage-wise based on their total value (See Descriptive Data, Table 1 to Table 15).

Further the Spearman's Rank Correlation is calculated by comparing Female household heads with Male household heads for each level of deprivation levels for the fifteen tables respectively. That is Abject Deprivation under Female head of the households with Abject Deprivation under Male head of the households. Similarly, Moderate Deprivation under Female head of the households with Moderate Deprivation under Male head of the households; Just Above Deprivation under Female head of the households with Just Above Deprivation under Male head of the households and Well Above Deprivation under Female head of the households with Well Above Deprivation under Male head of the households Additionally, the *t*-value for each of the deprivation levels for male and female head of households are found. That is, Abject Deprivation under Female head of the households with Abject Deprivation under Male head of the households. Similarly, Moderate Deprivation

under Female head of the households with Moderate Deprivation under Male head of the households; Just Above Deprivation under Female head of the households with Just Above Deprivation under Male head of the households and Well Above Deprivation under Female head of the households with Well Above Deprivation under Male head of the households. The *t*-test is calculated for a two-tailed distribution. The *t*-value is found to test whether there is a significant difference for each of the deprivation levels between male and female head of households. That is, the test is conducted to find whether the incidence of Abject Deprivation under Female head of the households was significantly higher than the incidence of Abject Deprivation under Male head of the households. Similar tests are conducted for other measures of deprivation. The null hypothesis that is being tested is that there is no significant difference between the incidence of deprivation between male headed and female households in the chosen category. The alternative is that the difference is significant. The *t*-test as used here is naturally a two tailed test.

The t statistics for two sample unequal variances is defined as:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where $\bar{X}_1$ = mean of sample size n_1

$\bar{X}_2$ = mean of sample size n_2

S_1^2 = variance of sample size n_1

S_2^2 = variance of sample size n_2

Section III: Results of the Analysis in Model 2:

The *t*-values found for each of the fifteen tables were:

Table 16: **Result of *T*-test conducted on NFHS-2 data**

		T-value	Table value of *t* at 5%	Accept/Reject Hypothesis

		T-value	Table value of *t* at 5%	Accept/Reject Hypothesis
RCSC	AD	0.295	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.527	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.576	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.537	2.060	Accept
RCST	AD	0.126	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.956	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.408	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.138	2.060	Accept
RCO	AD	0.161	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.17	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.061	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.256	2.060	Accept
UCSC	AD	0.554	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.217	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.522	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.522	2.060	Accept
UCST	AD	0.359	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.954	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.186	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.023	2.060	Accept
UCO	AD	0.22	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.08	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.791	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.047	2.060	Accept
SHT	AD	0.017	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.126	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.507	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.232	2.060	Accept
RT	AD	0.009	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.101	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.306	2.060	Accept

		T-value	Table value of *t* at 5%	Accept/Reject Hypothesis
	WAD	0.327	2.060	Accept
UT	AD	0.083	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.022	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.122	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.027	2.060	Accept
RRH	AD	0.054	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.249	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.452	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.285	2.060	Accept
RRM	AD	0.284	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.441	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.000	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.412	2.060	Accept
RRO	AD	0.157	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.617	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.447	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.273	2.060	Accept
URH	AD	0.373	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.104	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.915	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.273	2.060	Accept
URM	AD	0.909	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.883	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.959	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.028	2.060	Accept
URO	AD	0.221	2.060	Accept
	MD	0.233	2.060	Accept
	JAD	0.399	2.060	Accept
	WAD	0.054	2.060	Accept

Where AD stands for Abject Deprivation
MD stands for Moderate Deprivation
JAD stands for Just Above Deprivation
WAD stands for Well Above Deprivation
RCO stands for Rural Caste - Others
RCSC stands for Rural Caste - Scheduled Caste
RCST stands for Rural Caste - Scheduled Tribe
RT stands for Rural – Total
RRH stands for Rural Religion - Hindu
RRM stands for Rural Religion - Muslim
RRO stands for Rural Religion - Others
SHT stands for Sex of the Household Head - Total
UCO stands for Urban Caste - Others
UCSC stands for Urban Caste - Scheduled Caste
UCST stands for Urban Caste - Scheduled Tribe
UT stands for Urban – Total
URH stands for Urban Religion - Hindu
URM stands for Urban Religion - Muslim
URO stands for Urban Religion - Others
HFH stands for Household with Female Head
HMH stands for Household with Male Head

The table value for *t*, for 25 degrees of freedom at 5% significance level is 2.060 (as N equals 26 states), which is greater than all the t-values computed for the 15 respective tables and hence is statistically insignificant.

The Spearman's Rank Correlation between the Female headed households and Male headed Households in Abject Deprivation category showed high correlation for the categories Rural Caste(Scheduled Caste)[0.731] Rural Caste(Scheduled Tribe)[0.748] Rural(Total)[0.882], Rural Religion(Hindu) [0.667], Sex of the Household Head(Total) [0.882], Urban Religion (Hindu) [0.627]. The Rank correlation between the two household heads for Moderate Deprivation was only highly correlated for Rural(Total)[0.833], Rural Religion(Hindu) [0.776], Sex of the Household Head(Total) [0.850] , Urban (Total) [0.828] while in case of Urban Caste(Scheduled Caste)[-0.919] the correlation was highly negative. For Rural Religion (Muslim) the correlation between the two head of the households for Just above Deprivation and Well above Deprivation was perfectly correlated. In case of Just Above Deprivation the correlation was high only for Urban Caste(Scheduled Caste)[0.961] , Sex of the Household Head(Total) [0.745] ,Urban (Total)[0.794] and Urban Religion (Others)[0.698].While in case of Well Above Deprivation the correlation was high only for

Rural caste (Others)[0.863], Rural Caste(Scheduled Caste)[0.863], Rural Religion (Hindu)[0.863], Sex of the Household Head(Total) [0.842] , Urban Caste(Others [0.745], Urban (Total) [0.890] and Urban Religion(Muslim)[0.767]. The Spearman's Rank Correlation between the Female headed households and Male headed Households for each deprivation level for the fifteen different categories were insignificant (See Table 17).

The results obtained from the *t* values and the Spearman's rank correlations were insignificant. Therefore we conclude that the difference in the deprivation levels of male headed households and female headed households is not affected by the variable control over resources.

Conclusion:

The results obtained do not support the assumptions in the existing literature that if women were given access to resources it would make a difference to the family's standard of living. The six amenities which decide whether any female-headed households could break away from the vicious circle of poverty, could include gender-sensitive attainment indicators like the percentage of school going children, having better nutritional standard compared to male-headed households, as the survey conducted by K. Srinivasan and S. K. Mohanty (2004) consists of amenities which are infrastructural in nature. This requires further research and can be considered an important area to be studied.

Selected Bibliography:

- Bennett, Lyn (1992): '*Women, Poverty and Productivity in India'*, EDI Seminar Paper No. 43, World Bank, Washington DC
- Bloom, Sheila, Wypij, David and DasGupta, Monica (2001): "Dimensions of women's autonomy and the influence on maternal health care utilization in a North Indian city" *Demography* Feb, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp: 67 - 78
- Chen, Lincoln, Huq, Emdadul and D'souza, Stan (1981): "Sex Bias in the Family Allocation of food and health care in Rural Bangladesh" *Population and Development Review* Mar, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp: 55 – 70
- Deaton, Angus and Drèze, Jean (2002): "Poverty and Inequality in India ---A re-Examination" *Economic and Political Weekly* Sept.7, Vol.37, No.36, pp: 3729 – 3748
- Grurumurthy Anita (1998): **"**Women's Rights and Status: Questions of analysis and measurement." May, http:// www.sdnp.undp.org/gender/resources/mono7.html - 44k

- Haddad, Lawrence (1999):"Women's Status: Levels, Determinants, Consequences for Malnutrition, Interventions, and Policy" *Asian Development Review*, Vol. 17, Issue No. 1, 2, pp: 96 – 131
- Herz, Barbara (1989): '*Women in Development -- Issues for Economic and Sector Analysis'* Aug, WPS 269, World Bank, Washington DC
- Levine, Ruth, Glassman, Amanda and Schneidman, Miriam (2001): '*The health of women in Latin America and the Caribbean'*, World Bank, Washington DC
- Srinivasan, K. and Mohanty, S. K. (2004): "Deprivation of Basic Amenities by Caste and Religion ---Empirical study using NFHS DATA" *Economic and Political Weekly* Feb 14, pp: 728 –735
- United Nations(2001): "Important Concepts underlying Gender Mainstreaming" **,** August**,** http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.