

Status of Women Empowerment in Barmer (Rajasthan)

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment involves control and choice in power structures that exist in household communities, nations, and worldwide. Women empowerment involves their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home, and the ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order nationally and internationally. Employment can be a source of empowerment for women as it provides financial independence and thereby identity in the society and power structure in the family. This study reveals the employment of women in Barmer concerning other districts of Rajasthan and various districts of Rajasthan. The demographic study gives us data about sex ratio too. The sex ratio indicates the status of women in society. The education of women is the most powerful tool to get a respectful position in society. This study noticed that the female literacy rate is lesser than the male literacy rate. The literacy rate of women also varies in different districts of Rajasthan. Although initiatives are undertaken for the development of education, employment status of women, there is a need to create awareness to achieve the desired goal of empowerment in the state.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The empowerment of women in Barmer district of Rajasthan which one is facing many challenges regarding daily needs i.e., drinking water, shortage of approach roads for linkages to various institutes of health and education. The improvement in overall women empowerment is really imaging and produced drastic positive changes in very short time.

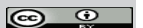
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The population of the Barmer district is 26,03,751, and out of which, 47.42 percent (12,34,729) is female as per census 2011. Therefore, the development of women folk is of utmost importance for the development of the district, and women empowerment is widely used irrespective of the strata of society. Women's empowerment involves 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 changes to create more just social and economic

order, nationally and internationally. Thus it is multi-dimensional. The World Bank defined empowerment as the "expansion of the assets and capabilities of individuals to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (<https://gsdrc.org/document-library/>

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empowerment-and-poverty-reduction-a-sourcebook/). Alsop and Heinsohn's (2005) defined empowerment as a person's capacity to make effective choices, that is, as the capacity to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes. Women empowerment needs to occur across women's lives, in their homes and communities, society and its structures, national and international boundaries. The term women empowerment was introduced in 1985 at the 3rd International Women's Conference at Nairobi. Women empowerment is related to gaining over their own lives and thereby enhancing their position in the power structure of the society and achieved through develop educational opportunities, employment facilities, and a reduction in the gender gap. The National Commission for women was set up by an act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights to women. Education and employment are two essential tools to describe women's empowerment to change their economic and social status of shortly as well as over a longer period of time (Agrawal, 2019). Sex ratio is also another important indicator of women's empowerment in society. Women empowerment is today's important issue to maintain harmony and to reduce conflicts in society, and equality presupposes radical social reforms (Nautiyal and Bourai, 2009).

The objective of the study was to describe women empowerment in the district using the above tools i.e., the sex ratio as a demographic factor; education status based on female literacy rate, gross enrolment ratio, school dropout rates, and employment status based on the employment of female workers in various sectors, female workforce participation rate, and average daily wage rate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Barmer district extends from 70°50' to 72°52' East longitude and 24°58' to 26°32' North latitude. It is situated in the southwest of the Rajasthan and is a part of the Thar desert. It is surrounded by Jaisalmer district in the north, Jalore in the south, Pali, Jodhpur in the east, and the Sindh province of Pakistan in the west. Barmer is one of the oldest habitations of the Indian Thar. The administration is exercised through 14 Tehsils, namely Sheo, Baitu, Pachpadra, Siwana, Dhorimanna, Samdari,

Patodi, Sindhari, Gudamalani, Barmer, Ramsar, and Chohtan and 380-gram panchayat. It has 2179 villages. The population of this district as per the census 2011 was 26,07,351 and the gender ratio is 896 female/ 1000 male. The population density of the district is 69 per Sq. Km. The literacy percentage is 59.65 (Male-73.64, Female-43.91). District per capita income is just ₹ 2824/-, contribution of Barmer district in the total income of the state is as low as 2.5% status of livelihoods is also very poor. The education level is even worse as the district is on the bottom. The secondary data were used for the study. The data were collected from the census reports of the Government, Economic Survey of Rajasthan 2013-2014, and Handbook of Statistical Barmer District at a Glance 2013. The ranking method was used to find out the status of different variables related to the empowerment of women of Barmer compared to other districts of Rajasthan over the years. Rank was assigned from highest to lowest-performing districts for positive indicators and vice versa.

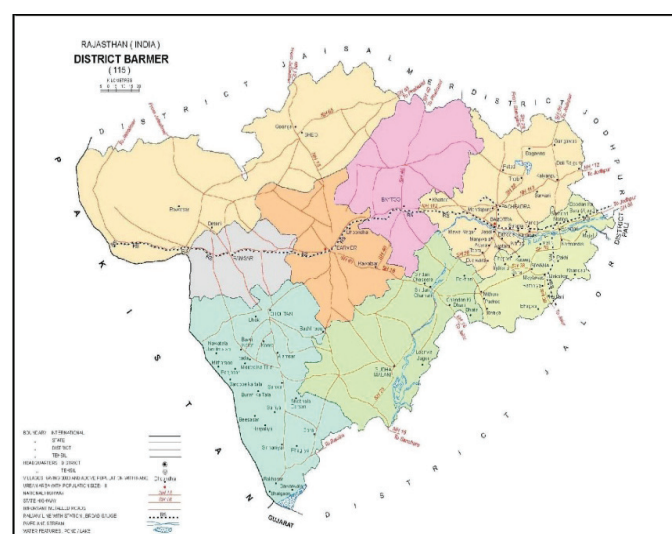


Fig. 1: Administrative map of Barmer district

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Sex ratio

The status of women in a particular society can be studied from demographic factors such as sex ratio, infant mortality rate etc. It was noticed that the state of Rajasthan has a sex ratio (number of females per 1000

males) of 926 as per the 2011 census as against 1084 in Karela and 618 in Daman and Diu 2011. The Barmer district holds a good position and has a sex ratio of 902 during 2011 compared to 892 in 2001 as against the state ratio of 926 in 2011 (Fig. 2). The ranking of districts of Rajasthan by sex ratio in 2001 and 2011 showed that the Dungarpur has the highest sex ratio of 994 and was in the topmost position while the lowest in Dhaulpur (846 in 2011). It has been observed that over the decades, the sex ratio in Rajasthan fluctuated but was found highest in 2001. The sex ratio has shown an improvement of about 0.2 to 2.0 percent from 2001 to 2011. It was also noticed that out of 33 districts of Rajasthan, 18 districts showed a higher sex ratio during the 2011 census, while in 15 districts, the sex ratio was lower than the average sex ratio of the state (Fig. 3).

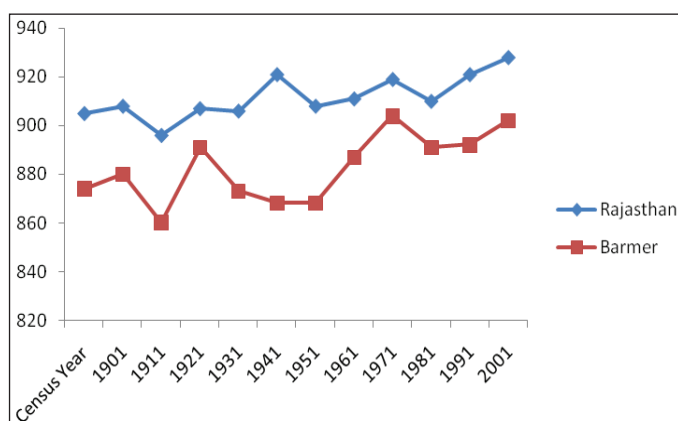


Fig. 2: Trends in sex ratio the state v/s district

The sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years is the vital indicator of the future trends of the sex composition in the population in the state (Christabell, 2009). Data of 2011 stated that the child sex ratio is the highest in Kerala (1084) and is lowest in Haryana (877). In-state of Rajasthan, it is 888 and in the Barmer district is 904. The declining sex ratio of children is not a positive indicator for women’s empowerment. Children’s sex ratio indicates the future trend of the status of women in society. Economic Survey, Rajasthan (2013-14) revealed that top-five district Banswara (934), Pratapgarh (933), Bhilwara (928), Udaipur (924), and Dungarpur (922) while the lowest five are Jhunjhunun (837), Sikar (848), Karauli (852), Ganganagar (854) and Dhaulpur (857).

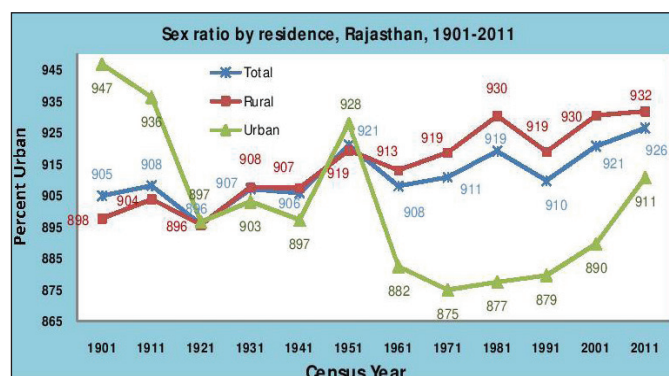


Fig. 3: Trends in sex ratio in the state of Rajasthan since 1901

2. Educational status

Education is the most powerful tool to bring a change in the status in the society to strengthen the females. It reduces inequalities and the gender gap in the family as well as society.

2.1 Trends in literacy over the years from 1951 to 2011

Education is the main crucial aspect compulsory for all-round expansion of human being. Despite determined complex works by the government and NGO’s, the academic level indefinitely is not up to the mark. The frequency of illiteracy in poor communities, predominantly in remote rural areas, is a material of serious concern. The growth of literacy in Rajasthan and Barmer has shown an increasing trend from 1951 to 2011.

Table 1: Literacy over years from 1951 to 2011

Year	Rajasthan	Barmer
1951	8.50	—
1961	18.12	—
1971	22.57	—
1981	30.11	—
1991	38.55	—
2001	60.41	58.99
2011	66.11	57.49

Data (Table 5) showed a clear picture of the literacy rate of females over the years, which was a promising one, but the female literacy rate was always lesser than the male literacy rate. The literacy rate in the Barmer district

Table 2: Growth in Literacy rates in Rajasthan and in India from 1951 to 2011 (in per cent)

State/Nation	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Rajasthan	8.50	18.12	22.57	30.11	38.55	60.41	67.06
India	18.33	28.30	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	74.04

Decadal change in Literacy rates from 1951-2011

	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
Rajasthan	9.62	4.45	7.54	8.44	21.86	6.65
India	9.97	6.15	9.12	8.64	12.63	9.20

Sources: Census of India 2011.

is 56.5 percent which is lower than the state average (66.1 percent), and it ranks 29th among the districts. The gender gap of the literacy rate is 30.3 percent in the district (Table 1-3).

Table 3: District-wise Literacy rates and change in last decades in Rajasthan

Sl. No.	Name of the district	2001	2011	Change (%)
01	Ganganagar	64.74	70.25	5.51
02	Hanumangarh	63.05	68.37	5.32
03	Bikaner	57.36	65.92	8.56
04	Churu	67.59	67.46	0.13 (-)
05	Jhunjhunun	73.04	74.72	1.68
06	Alwar	61.74	71.68	9.94
07	Bharatpur	63.58	71.16	7.58
08	Dhaulpur	60.13	70.14	10.01
09	Karauli	63.40	67.34	3.94
10	Sawai Madhopur	56.67	66.19	9.52
11	Dausa	61.81	69.17	7.36
12	Jaipur	69.90	76.44	6.54
13	Sikar	70.47	72.98	2.51
14	Nagaur	57.28	64.08	6.8
15	Jodhpur	56.67	67.09	10.42
16	Jaisalmer	50.97	58.04	7.07
17	Barmer	58.99	57.49	1.5 (-)
18	Jalore	46.49	55.58	9.09
19	Sirohi	53.94	56.02	2.08
20	Pali	54.39	63.23	8.84
21	Ajmer	64.68	70.46	5.78
22	Tonk	51.97	62.46	10.49
23	Bundi	55.57	62.31	6.74
24	Bhilwara	50.71	62.71	12.0
25	Rajsamand	55.73	63.93	8.2
26	Dungarpur	48.57	60.78	12.21
27	Banswara	45.54	57.20	11.66
28	Chittaurgarh	53.99	62.51	8.52

29	Kota	73.52	77.48	3.96
30	Baran	59.50	67.38	7.88
31	Jhalawar	57.32	62.13	4.81
32	Udapur	59.77	62.74	2.97
33	Pratapgarh*	48.25	56.30	8.05
	Rajasthan	60.41	67.06	6.65

Sources: Census of India and Provisional Population Totals- Rajasthan.

District-wise Literacy: Now, let us discuss the data present in Table 3, which shows district-wise literacy rates in Rajasthan. Kota is the most literate district in the state, with 77.48 percent literate persons (it was also top-ranked in 2001), followed closely by Jaipur district with 76.44 percent literacy rate (from fourth to second from last decade), while Jhunjhunun district slightly sliding down after the decade, from the second position in 2001 to third in 2011, with 74.72 percent literate persons. Jalore is at the bottom in Rajasthan with the lowest 55.58 percent literacy rate where its neighboring district Sirohi is just close to it in literacy point of view also with second smallest percent of literacy, only 56.02 percent.

Though, 9.09 percent change has occurred in the Jalore district. At the same time, the highest growth in literacy is recorded in Dungarpur district at 12.21 percent, while the lowest is in Jhunjhunun at 1.68 percent excepting two districts (Barmer and Churu) which have negative change (1.5 & 0.13 respectively). Although 6 districts – Dungarpur (12.21), Bhilwara (12.0), Banswara (11.66), Tonk (10.49), Jodhpur (10.42), and Dhaulpur (10.01) of literacy has been raised by more than 10 percent in the last decade (means at least 1 percent average growth annually). Besides, 15 districts crossed the average state level. In contrast, the national average literacy level crossed only the top 3 districts. However, not a single

district has touched the target (85 percent) set by the Planning Commission of India to be achieved by 2011-12.

3. Gross Enrolment Ratio

Gross enrolment ratio of children in class I to VIII of all the states of India was studied. It was seen that total enrolment was higher in Manipur (151.6), Arunachal Pradesh (146.3), Meghalaya (138.5) but lower in Rajasthan (99.3). Rajasthan was in the 21st position. Girls' enrolment ratio is always less than boys' except in Meghalaya. Gross enrolment ratio of children in class I to VIII of all the districts of the states of Rajasthan was studied. It was seen that total enrolment was higher in Jhunjhunu (99.99), Sikar (99.94), Partapgarh (99.87) but lower in Barmer (99.54). Barmer was at 13th position, and girls' enrolment ratio is always seen to be less than boys (Fig. 4).

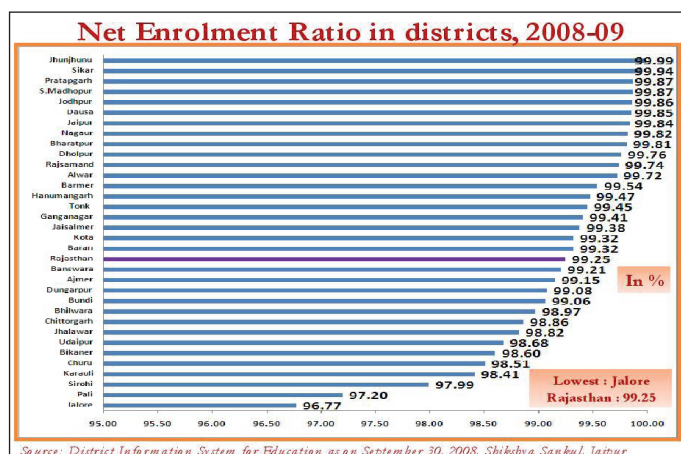


Fig. 4: Net enrolment ratio in districts of Rajasthan, 2008-09

4. Employment

Employment is a set of actions in which actions are centered for economic functions. Family is a majority friendly group to which man belongs and the most successful agent in transmitting social heritage. It is their accountability to take care of their family (Chauhan, 2018). The population in the age group of 15-59 is considered active for discharging different types of activities. According to NSSO survey conducted from July 2009 to June 2010 (Source: Key indicators of

employment and unemployment in India, 2009-10, NSSO) indicated that the population comprised of males (61%) and females (64%) in rural areas of Assam as compared to males (59%) and females (61%) in rural areas at all India level. Similarly, these values were for males (66%) and females (71%) in urban areas of Assam compared to at all India levels of 66 percent males and 66 percent females (Table 4).

Table 4: Average daily wage rate in rural areas in Rajasthan

Year	Unskilled labour wages (in Rupees)	
	Man	Woman
1998-99	113.02	98.38
1999-00	116.83	98.83
2000-01	125.34	109.16
2001-02	127.82	116.14
2002-03	122.93	106.51
2003-04	126.27	110.81
2004-05	115.60	103.52
2005-06	109.49	97.12
2006-07	105.0	96.17
2008-09	128.03	116.80
2009-10	125.67	117.29
2010-11	141.53	129.06
2011-12	160.27	148.36
2012-13	168.93	158.09
2013-14	173.06	159.02
2014-15	184.48	178.94
2015-16	186.26	176.16
2016-17	181.0	—

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Rajasthan.

The labour force participation rate i.e., number of persons in the labour force per 1000 persons in the age group of 15 -59 years according to stock status (both principal and subsidiary status) approach, was 808 male, 473 female and 645 both for male and female in Rajasthan and at all India level it was 836 male, 345 female and 596 for male and female took together.

It was evident that self-employment was more in rural areas of Rajasthan than in other parts of the country. According to an analysis, Arunachal Pradesh (243.9), Manipur (234.6), Meghalaya (232.8) are performing well on the indicator of ownership of assets by women,

whereas Chhattisgarh (58.1), West Bengal (68), and Rajasthan (72.7) are the states where ownership of assets by women is comparatively low than other states (Agarwal, 2019).

Employment of women in the organized sector

The employment of women in the organized sector in the state was 140.0 thousand during 1991 and 172.6 during 200.

Average daily Wage Rate in Rural Areas in Rajasthan

It was observed (Table 4) that the average daily wage rate for unskilled labor and the others showed a more or less steady upward trend. During the period 1998-99 to 2016-17, the average growth of unskilled male labor wage rate varied between 105 and 181 rupees while the growth of female wage rate was 96.17 to 178.94 rupees. Thus, it can be said that there is always discrimination in the female wage rate (Handy and Kassam, 2004).

CONCLUSION

According to census 2011, the total population of Barmer district is 2603751, comprising 1369022 males and 1234729 females. It shares almost 3.80 percent of the state population but 8.29 percent of the state area. The density of the district is 92 persons per Sq. Km. which is lower than the state density (200 persons per Sq. Km.). Nearly 93 percent population of the district lives in rural areas, where the proportion of the urban population to the total population is 7 percent. In census 2011, the sex ratio of the district is 902. The district is one among the seven districts having the lowest sex ratio in the state (Dhauipur 846, Jaisalmer 852, Karauli 861, Bharatpur 880, Ganganagar 887, Alwar 895, and Sawai Madhopur 894). The district has a higher child (age group 0 to 6 years) sex ratio, i.e., 904. There are only 176257 Scheduled Tribe persons living in the district, which is only 6.8 percent of the total population, whereas the Scheduled Caste population shares 16.8 percent of the total population. The literacy rate of the district 56.5 percent, is lower than the state average 66.1 percent. The male literacy rate of the district 70.09 percent is lower than the state literacy rate 79.2 percent, while the female literacy rate of the district (40.6%) is significantly

lower than the state literacy rate i.e., 52.1%. The work participation rate of the district 46.2% is higher than the state 43.6%. The male & female work participation rates are 50.9% and 41.0%, respectively (Gill *et al.* 2015).

Empowerment needs to occur across many domains i.e., women's own lives, in their homes and communities, in society, in a national and international environment. Empowerment must occur along economic, socio-cultural, interpersonal, political, legal dimensions. Women face multiple barriers in terms of gender biases, low wages, unequal access to education and other productive inputs etc. Moreover, women need to face some more structural barriers due to economic development and globalization. The lower rate of Women's participation in the organized sector is an alarming factor in economic empowerment. The decline in 's workforce participation rate is a matter of concern and has implications for overall economic empowerment. Women's participation in income-generating activities will lead to women's empowerment as by having access to resources, and a woman can improve her bargaining position, increase in self-esteem or self-worth. Education is essential to getting employment in the organized sector, jobs in higher prestige occupational categories, and positions of authority in any employment sector. Therefore it is necessary to increase decent work and productive employment with more opportunities for women in different sectors.

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