



Empowerment Status of Agriculture Women Laborers

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1. Introduction

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of rural communities, with women laborers forming a significant part of the workforce. The empowerment of these women is essential not only for improving their socio-economic status but also for enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability. Empowerment in this context involves ensuring that women have access to resources, can participate in decision-making processes, and have control over the income generated from their labor. To understand the levels of empowerment among agricultural women laborers, this study focuses on six villages from the Manchal and Yacharam Mandals in the Ranga Reddy district: Bodakonda, Korravani Thanda, Thallapallyguda, Chowderpally, Gungal, and Gaddamallaiahguda.

This chapter delves into the analysis of women's empowerment across five key domains: Production, Resources, Income, Leadership, and Time. By examining these dimensions, the study aims to highlight the areas where women are most empowered and identify the domains where further support and intervention are needed. The findings provide a comprehensive view of the empowerment levels of women laborers in these villages, offering valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders working towards gender equity in agriculture.

Empowerment of Women

Empowerment of women refers to achieving the ability to think independently, act freely, develop a strong sense of self-worth, and believe in one's capacity to bring about desired changes. It also includes having the right to control one's life, make choices, exercise

bargaining power, and reach one's full potential as equal members of society. Empowerment is closely related to concepts such as autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization, and self-confidence. In a broader sense, empowerment involves expanding freedom, choice, and action (Sen 1999) Disempowerment limits the choices available to poor people, but as they gain real choice, they gain control over their lives. Narayan (2002) defines empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities that enable poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable the institutions that impact their lives. Narayan (2005) further asserts that an empowerment agenda promotes development effectiveness by fostering growth patterns that benefit the poor. Empowerment approaches are underpinned by human rights and civil liberties and are closely linked with governance. Just as corruption is both a symptom and cause of poor governance, empowerment is both a symptom and cause of good governance.

Inclusion through empowerment can drive societal development. Empowerment not only contributes to poverty reduction but also reduces inequality. It enhances human capabilities (such as education, awareness, healthcare, social safety) and, in turn, increases society's potential for development and growth. Empowerment implies adopting more participatory, bottom-up approaches to development (Narayan, 2002). Like poverty, empowerment is a multidimensional concept. It requires the enhancement of assets and capabilities among the poor. Assets include both physical and financial resources, such as land, housing, livestock, and jewelry. Capabilities, on the other hand, enable the effective use of these resources and may be categorized as human, social, or political capabilities. Human capabilities encompass health, education, and skills; social capabilities include social identity, leadership, cohesion, trust, and organizational capacity; while political capabilities involve participation, representation, and association.

Empowerment approaches to development place people at the center of development strategies. They strengthen the knowledge and skills of the poor, help them manage resources, establish their identity, and support them in escaping poverty traps. However, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for empowerment. In the rural Indian context, where society is not homogeneous, strategies must differ across socio-economic categories. Women's empowerment, in particular, involves enhancing their economic, social, and political strength. The challenge lies in identifying the key elements of empowerment that vary across different socio-economic strata. Empowerment can be

Economic, social, or political, and can be characterized by relationships within households, within society, or across societies. This study views the empowerment of women agricultural laborers within the household and the broader social context. Narayan (2002) outlines an empowerment framework that describes the relationship between institutions that support empowerment, their effects on assets and capabilities, and the resulting improvements in development outcomes. Women's empowerment involves creating the conditions that enable women to make choices, acknowledging that women may have different preferences from men and different abilities to make choices due to gender inequalities in bargaining power and access to resources (IEG, 2017).

Women's empowerment encompasses three key dimensions: economic empowerment, political empowerment, and social empowerment.

Economic empowerment focuses on enhancing women's ability to access economic and productive resources.

Political empowerment involves increasing women's participation and involvement in decision-making processes.

Social empowerment refers to the improvement of gender roles within households and the community.

Achieving systemic change to eliminate barriers to empowerment necessitates a holistic understanding of the interconnected socio-economic issues affecting women. Rather than examining individual components in isolation, it is important to consider how these various factors interact and collectively drive change (Oxfam, 2017).

Women Empowerment Index

In this study, the Women Empowerment Index has been calculated using the methodology of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) developed by Alkire et al. (2013). This index is specifically designed to assess women's empowerment at the household level. The WEAI comprises two sub-indices:

1. **The Five Domains of Empowerment Index (5DE)**
2. **The Gender Parity Index (GPI)**

For this study, only the 5DE has been utilized to evaluate women's empowerment. The Women Empowerment Index derived from this methodology reflects the empowerment levels of women agricultural laborers across five key dimensions. Additionally, the method

quantifies the contribution of these five dimensions to the overall empowerment status of the agricultural laborers.

3. Analysis and Interpretation

The study uses simple tabular and percentage analysis for exploring the objectives of the study. Specifically for measuring empowerment status, Women empowerment Index has been constructed using sample survey data. The index used in the study is based on the method suggested by Alkire et al. (2013).

Method of Constructing the Women Empowerment Index

The initial step in constructing the Women Empowerment Index involves identifying agricultural women laborers who are disempowered. This study utilizes five key dimensions, which are further divided into 10 indicators, each with specific weights assigned. These details are summarized in Table 6.1. The five dimensions are designed to capture the key areas of importance for women engaged in agricultural work (Alkire et al., 2013).

Table: 1 Dimension, Indicators, and Weights in the Women Empowerment Index

Dimension	Indicator	Weightage
Production	Input in productive decisions	1/10
	Autonomy in production	1/10
Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	1/15
	Access to and decisions about credit	1/15
Income	Control over use of income	1/5
Leadership	Group membership	1/10
	Speaking in public	1/10
Time	Workload	1/10
	Leisure	1/10

The above table 1 presents the five dimensions of the Women Empowerment Index, along with the corresponding indicators and their assigned weights. Each dimension has 2 indicators, with each indicator weighted at 1/10. These dimensions contribute 2/10 (or 1/5) to the overall index. The Resources dimension has 3 indicators, each weighted at 1/15. Together, they contribute 3/15 (or 1/5) to the overall index. Income Dimension: Income dimension has only 1 indicator, weight assigned as 1/5. The weight distribution ensures that each dimension contributes equally to the Women Empowerment Index, despite the varying

number of indicators within each dimension. This table provides a clear overview of how the weights are assigned and why they differ for some indicators in the Women Empowerment Index.

Production Domain

The Production Domain assesses women’s participation and autonomy in making decisions related to agricultural production. It reflects the extent to which women are involved in and have control over key farming decisions, such as what crops to plant, when to plant, and how to manage agricultural resources. This domain is crucial in understanding the empowerment of women in their primary economic activities within agriculture.

Table: 2 Responses of Women Agriculture Laborers on Productive Domain

Village	Input in Productive Decisions		Autonomy in Production		Input in Productive Decisions		Autonomy in Production	
	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Bodakonda	189	63.00%	111	37.00%	180	60.00%	120	40.00%
Korravani Thanda	172	57.33%	128	42.67%	160	53.33%	140	46.67%
Thallapallyguda	181	60.33%	119	39.67%	170	56.67%	130	43.33%
Chowderpally	165	55.00%	135	45.00%	158	52.67%	142	47.33%
Gungal	190	63.33%	110	36.67%	185	61.67%	115	38.33%
Gaddamallaiahguda	175	58.33%	125	41.67%	168	56.00%	132	44.00%

Source: Compiled from primary data

Table 2 illustrates the responses of women agricultural laborers from six villages regarding their involvement in the productive domain, specifically focusing on their participation in productive decisions and their autonomy in production. In Bodakonda, 63% of women reported being involved in decisions related to crop production, with 60% indicating they have autonomy in these decisions. Korravani Thanda shows slightly lower participation, with 57.33% of women involved in decision-making and 53.33% having autonomy. Thallapallyguda exhibits similar patterns, with 60.33% participation in decisions and 56.67% autonomy in production. Chowderpally has the lowest participation and autonomy rates among the villages, with 55% of women involved in productive decisions and 52.67%

reporting autonomy. Gungal stands out with the highest levels of empowerment, where 63.33% of women participate in decisions, and 61.67% have autonomy in production. Gaddamallaiahguda also shows relatively strong involvement, with 58.33% of women participating in decisions and 56% having autonomy.

Overall, the data suggests that while a majority of women across these villages are involved in productive decisions, there is still a significant proportion that are not, indicating areas where empowerment efforts could be strengthened, particularly in villages like Chowderpally and Korravani Thanda.

Table: 3 Production domains of agriculture laborers in the study area

Village	Production Domain Score	Production Rank
Thallapallyguda	0.565	1
Gungal	0.490	2
Bodakonda	0.485	3
Korravani Thanda	0.485	3
Gaddamallaiahguda	0.450	5
Chowderpally	0.445	6

Source: Compiled from primary data

Explanation: In the Production Domain, Thallapallyguda ranks highest, indicating that women in this village have the most significant decision-making power and autonomy in agricultural production activities. Gungal follows in second place, showing a moderate level of empowerment in production. Bodakonda and Korravani Thanda are tied for third place, suggesting similar levels of decision-making power for women in these villages. Gaddamallaiahguda and Chowderpally rank lower, with Chowderpally at the bottom, highlighting potential areas where women may need more support in agricultural production.

Resources Domain

The Resources Domain evaluates women's access to and control over productive assets, such as land, livestock, and financial resources. It examines whether women have ownership of these assets and the ability to make decisions regarding their use, including the ability to purchase, sell, or transfer assets. This domain is essential in understanding how empowered

women are in managing the resources that are critical for their livelihoods and economic security.

Table: 4 Responses of Women Agriculture Laborers on Resources Domain

Village	Ownership of Assets				Purchase, Sale, or Transfer of Assets				Access to and Decisions about Credit			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Bodakonda	150	50.0	150	50.0	140	46.67	160	53.3	130	43.3	170	56.67
Korravani Thanda	145	48.3	155	51.6	138	46.00	162	54.0	135	45.0	165	55.00
Thallapallyguda	160	53.3	140	46.6	150	50.00	150	50.0	145	48.3	155	51.67
Chowderpally	155	51.6	145	48.3	145	48.33	155	51.6	140	46.6	160	53.33
Gungal	170	56.6	130	43.3	155	51.67	145	48.3	150	50.0	150	50.00
Gaddamallai ahguda	160	53.3	140	46.6	150	50.00	150	50.0	145	48.3	155	51.67

Source: Compiled from primary data

The table provides insights into the responses of women agricultural laborers across six villages concerning the Resources Domain, focusing on asset ownership, participation in the purchase, sale, or transfer of assets, and access to and decisions about credit. In Bodakonda, half of the women reported owning assets, with 50% involvement in asset transactions and only 43.33% having access to credit, indicating a moderate level of empowerment in this village. Korravani Thanda shows slightly lower asset ownership, with 48.33% of women owning assets and 46% participating in asset transactions, while 45% have access to credit, suggesting that a significant portion of women still face barriers in this domain. Thallapallyguda demonstrates a higher level of empowerment, with 53.33% of women owning assets and 50% involved in asset transactions. Similarly, Gaddamallai ahguda mirrors these figures, with 53.33% asset ownership and 50% participation in transactions. However, only 48.33% of women in these villages have access to credit, highlighting room for improvement in financial empowerment. In Chowderpally, 51.67% of women own assets, and 48.33% are involved in transactions, with 46.67% having access to credit, indicating a

balanced but still limited level of empowerment. Gungal stands out with the highest asset ownership at 56.67% and the highest participation in asset transactions at 51.67%, reflecting a stronger level of empowerment in these areas. However, access to credit is evenly split, with 50% of women reporting access. Overall, the data suggests that while asset ownership and involvement in transactions are relatively strong across these villages, access to credit remains a challenge, particularly in Bodakonda and Korravani Thanda, where fewer women have financial decision-making power.

These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance women's financial empowerment, especially in areas where access to credit is limited.

Table: 5 Resource domain of agriculture laborers in the study area

Village	Resources Domain Score	Resources Rank
Thallapallyguda	0.525	1
Bodakonda	0.525	1
Gaddamallaiahguda	0.502	3
Gungal	0.488	4
Korravani Thanda	0.439	5
Chowderpally	0.439	5

Source: Compiled from primary data

Explanation: In the Resources Domain, Thallapallyguda and Bodakonda are tied for first place, indicating that women in these villages have the best access to and control over productive resources such as land, assets, and credit. Gaddamallaiahguda ranks third, showing good resource access but slightly lower than the top two villages. Gungal is fourth, with moderate resource access, while Korravani Thanda and Chowderpally are tied for fifth place, indicating that women in these villages may face more challenges in accessing or controlling agricultural resources.

Income Domain

The Income Domain focuses on women's control over income generated from their labor and other agricultural activities. It examines whether women have the power to make decisions about how their income is used, either independently or jointly with others. This domain is a key indicator of financial autonomy and economic empowerment, highlighting the degree of control women have over their earnings and financial resources within the household.

Table: 6 Responses of Women Agriculture Laborers on Income Domain

Village	Control over Use of Income			
	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Bodakonda	175	58.33%	125	41.67%
Korravani Thanda	165	55.00%	135	45.00%
Thallapallyguda	180	60.00%	120	40.00%
Chowderpally	170	56.67%	130	43.33%
Gungal	178	59.33%	122	40.67%
Gaddamallaiahguda	172	57.33%	128	42.67%

Source: Compiled from primary data

The table 6 highlights the level of financial autonomy among women agricultural laborers in six villages, focusing on their control over the use of income. In Bodakonda, 58.33% of women report having control over their income, indicating a reasonable level of financial empowerment, although 41.67% still lack this autonomy. Korravani Thanda shows slightly lower financial control, with 55% of women exercising control over their income, while 45% do not. Thallapallyguda stands out with the highest financial autonomy, where 60% of women control their income, compared to 40% who do not.

Chowderpally presents a balanced picture, with 56.67% of women having financial control, but 43.33% still lacking this autonomy. Gungal closely follows, with 59.33% of women reporting control over their income, while 40.67% do not. Gaddamallaiahguda shows moderate financial empowerment, with 57.33% of women exercising control over their income, leaving 42.67% without this control. Overall, the data reveals that while a majority of women in these villages have some level of financial autonomy, a significant proportion still lacks control over their income. This suggests that while progress has been made, further efforts are needed to ensure greater financial empowerment for all women agricultural laborers, particularly in Korravani Thanda and Chowderpally.

Table: 7 Income domains of agriculture laborers in the study area

Village	Income Domain Score	Income Rank
Thallapallyguda	0.520	1
Gaddamallaiahguda	0.500	2
Chowderpally	0.460	3
Bodakonda	0.440	4
Korravani Thanda	0.420	5
Gungal	0.420	5

Source: Compiled from primary data

Explanation: In the Income Domain, Thallapallyguda once again ranks highest, indicating that women in this village have the strongest control over income generated from agricultural activities. Gaddamallaiahguda follows closely in second place, showing good income control among women. Chowderpally ranks third, indicating moderate control over income, while Bodakonda is in fourth place. Korravani Thanda and Gungal are tied for fifth place, suggesting that women in these villages may have less control over how income from agriculture is used.

Leadership Domain

The Leadership Domain assesses women's involvement in community groups and their ability to influence public decisions. It looks at whether women hold membership in agricultural or community organizations and their confidence in speaking up in public forums. This domain is critical for understanding women's participation in leadership roles and their capacity to affect change in their communities, reflecting broader social empowerment beyond the household.

Table: 8 Responses of Women Agriculture Laborers on Leadership Domain

Village	Group Membership		Speaking in Public		Speaking in Public		Speaking in Public	
	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Bodakonda	160	53.33%	140	46.67%	145	48.33%	155	51.67%
Korravani Thanda	150	50.00%	150	50.00%	138	46.00%	162	54.00%
Thallapallyguda	165	55.00%	135	45.00%	150	50.00%	150	50.00%
Chowderpally	155	51.67%	145	48.33%	140	46.67%	160	53.33%
Gungal	168	56.00%	132	44.00%	155	51.67%	145	48.33%
Gaddamallaiahguda	162	54.00%	138	46.00%	148	49.33%	152	50.67%

Source: Compiled from primary data

The table highlights the level of leadership and public engagement among women agricultural laborers across six villages. Bodakonda shows that 53.33% of women participate in group membership, although only 48.33% feel confident speaking in public. Korravani Thanda presents an equal split, with 50% of women involved in group activities, but only 46% confident in public speaking, indicating potential areas for development in leadership skills.

Thallapallyguda exhibits higher engagement, with 55% of women participating in groups and 50% confident in public speaking, showing a balanced level of leadership. Chowderpally has similar patterns to Korravani Thanda, with slightly over half of the women participating in groups, but less confidence in public speaking (46.67%). Gungal stands out with the highest group membership at 56% and relatively high public speaking confidence at 51.67%, reflecting a strong leadership presence among women. Gaddamallaiahguda also shows strong group membership at

54%, with 49.33% of women confident in speaking publicly, indicating a balanced but still improvable level of empowerment. Overall, while group membership is relatively high across these villages, public speaking confidence varies, suggesting that additional support may be needed to enhance women's leadership roles, particularly in Korravani Thanda and Chowderpally.

Table: 9 Income domains of agriculture laborers in study area

Village	Leadership Domain Score	Leadership Rank
Korravani Thanda	0.575	1
Gungal	0.560	2
Bodakonda	0.510	3
Gaddamallaiahguda	0.490	4
Thallapallyguda	0.455	5
Chowderpally	0.435	6

Source: Compiled from primary data

Explanation: In the Leadership Domain, Korravani Thanda ranks highest, indicating that women in this village are most actively involved in community groups and public decision-making. Gungal follows closely in second place, also showing strong leadership among women. Bodakonda ranks third, with a good level of women's participation in leadership activities. Gaddamallaiahguda is fourth, while Thallapallyguda and Chowderpally rank fifth and sixth, respectively, suggesting that women in these villages may have fewer opportunities or face more barriers to participating in leadership roles.

Time Domain

The Time Domain examines the allocation of women's time between work and leisure, focusing on their workload in agricultural and domestic activities. It assesses whether women have sufficient time for rest and leisure, which is essential for their overall well-being and quality of life. This domain highlights the balance between productive and personal time, revealing the extent to which women are able to manage their responsibilities without being overburdened.

Table: 10 Responses of Women Agriculture Laborers on Time Domain

Village	Workload				Leisure			
	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Bodakonda	140	46.67%	160	53.33%	130	43.33%	170	56.67%
Korravani Thanda	135	45.00%	165	55.00%	125	41.67%	175	58.33%
Thallapallyguda	150	50.00%	150	50.00%	140	46.67%	160	53.33%
Chowderpally	145	48.33%	155	51.67%	135	45.00%	165	55.00%
Gungal	160	53.33%	140	46.67%	150	50.00%	150	50.00%
Gaddamallaihguda	155	51.67%	145	48.33%	145	48.33%	155	51.67%

Source: Compiled from primary data

The table 10 provides insights into the workload and leisure time of women agricultural laborers across six villages. In Bodakonda, 46.67% of women feel their workload is manageable, but 53.33% do not, indicating that many women face significant work burdens. Additionally, only 43.33% of women report having sufficient leisure time, with 56.67% feeling they do not have enough, highlighting a need for better time management and support. Korravani Thanda presents a similar situation, where 45% of women find their workload manageable, but 55% feel overburdened. The leisure time situation is even more concerning, with only 41.67% of women reporting sufficient leisure time, while 58.33% do not have enough time for rest and relaxation. Thallapallyguda and Chowderpally both show a balanced workload, with 50% and 48.33% of women, respectively, finding their workload manageable. However, the leisure time remains a challenge, with only 46.67% and 45% of women reporting enough leisure, while over half of the women in both villages feel they lack sufficient time for rest.

Gungal stands out with the highest percentage (53.33%) of women reporting a manageable workload and a balanced leisure time situation, where 50% of women feel they have enough time for rest. Gaddamallaihguda also shows a relatively balanced workload, with 51.67% of women finding it manageable, but the leisure time remains an area for improvement, as 48.33% report having enough time, while 51.67% do not. Overall, the data suggests that while workload management is a concern across most villages, leisure time is a significant

issue, particularly in Bodakonda and Korravani Thanda, where a majority of women report insufficient time for rest and relaxation. These findings point to the need for interventions that address both workload distribution and the provision of leisure time to improve the overall well-being of women agricultural laborers.

Table: 11 Time domain of agriculture laborers in the study area

Village	Time Domain Score	Time Rank
Gaddamallaiahguda	0.517	1
Thallapallyguda	0.500	2
Bodakonda	0.496	3
Chowderpally	0.494	4
Korravani Thanda	0.490	5
Gungal	0.476	6

Source: Compiled from primary data

Explanation: In the Time Domain, Gaddamallaiahguda ranks first, indicating that women in this village have the best balance between work and leisure time. Thallapallyguda is second, showing a good level of time management. Bodakonda and Chowderpally follow in third and fourth place, respectively, with moderate time management. Korravani Thanda is fifth, while Gungal ranks last, suggesting that women in these villages may have heavier workloads or less time for leisure activities. Each table and its accompanying explanation provide insight into how women in these six villages are empowered across different aspects of agriculture. Thallapallyguda consistently performs well, especially in Production, Resources, and Income, indicating strong overall empowerment. Korravani Thanda excels in Leadership, while Gaddamallaiahguda shows strong performance in the Time and Income domains. Chowderpally generally ranks lower, indicating potential areas for improvement, particularly in leadership and production. Gungal shows strength in leadership but struggles with time management, and Bodakonda demonstrates balanced performance across most domains.

Summary

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the empowerment levels of agricultural women laborers across six villages in the Manchal and Yacharam Mandals of Ranga Reddy district. The analysis was conducted across five key domains: Production, Resources, Income, Leadership, and Time. Thallapallyguda emerged as the most empowered village overall, particularly excelling in the Production, Resources, and Income domains.

Women in this village have significant decision-making power, access to resources, and control over income, indicating a strong level of overall empowerment. Korravani Thanda stood out in the Leadership domain, with women actively participating in community groups and public decision-making. However, this village showed lower scores in the Income and Resources domains, suggesting areas for potential improvement. Gaddamallaiahguda showed strength in the Time and Income domains, indicating that women here manage their work-life balance effectively and have good control over income. However, there is room for growth in leadership activities. Bodakonda demonstrated a balanced performance across most domains, particularly in the Resources domain, where it tied for the highest rank. However, there is a need to strengthen income control and leadership among women in this village. Chowderpally generally ranked lower across most domains, particularly in leadership and production, highlighting significant challenges that women in this village face in gaining empowerment. This suggests a need for targeted interventions to support women in these areas. Gungal showed strength in the Leadership domain but struggled with time management, ranking lowest in the Time domain. This indicates that while women in Gungal are involved in leadership, they may be overburdened with work, leaving less time for leisure. Overall, the analysis reveals that while some villages demonstrate strong empowerment in specific domains, others face challenges that need to be addressed to achieve gender equity in agriculture. The findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions tailored to the unique needs of each village, aimed at enhancing the empowerment of agricultural women laborers in the region.

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