



**FACTORS DETERMINING EMPOWERMENT OF AGED WIDOW IN
RAINGAMARI VILLAGE OF BATIAGHATA THANA IN KHULNA
DISTRICT OF BANGLADESH**

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Abstract: This study mainly focused on recognizing the influence of socioeconomic factors to determine empowerment for aged widow. Two hundred randomly selected widow (aged 60 and above) from Raingamari village of Batiaghata thana in Khulna District were interviewed by administering a semi-structured interview schedule. Findings of the study revealed that age of the widow had statistically significant relation ($p < 0.047$) with women empowerment index while living arrangement, occupational status, personal income, saving and land ownership were also significantly related with women empowerment. On the other hand, year of schooling had insignificant relationship ($p > 0.163$) with women empowerment index, whereas duration of being widow was negatively related with empowerment of women ($p > 0.250$). Additionally, total household income also had no significant relationship with empowerment process. Moreover, correlation coefficient of this study exposed that lower age of the respondents indicated higher women empowerment index ($p < 0.035$). Furthermore, higher the income of the respondent, savings, landed property and household assets ensured higher women empowerment. Finally, the study, therefore, concluded that widow's economic independence, in terms of income, savings and ownership of land or household assets, is the most influential factors to determine their level of empowerment than the non-economic factors, *i.e.* year of schooling, duration of being widow and living arrangement.

Keywords: economic status, non-economic status, widow and empowerment

Introduction

Women, especially aged, have been subordinated to men almost always and everywhere, though they seem to have recognized and protested that situation in some form or other (Dworkin, 2011). Bangladesh, becoming one of the developing countries of the world, have a noticeable number of population who are living under the poverty line especially old aged women (Butler, 2012). While Bangladesh has been persistently trying to overcome the poverty regime, yet most of the distressed widowed, divorced and husband-deserted women are struggling hard to subsist due to impoverished economic condition (Sharma, 2015). After death of husband, the vulnerable situation of widow become worse due to social and cultural perceptions of society, especially in rural areas that generally undergo unparalleled amount of sufferings (Hossain, 2010; Sultana, 2010; Kabir & Jahan, 2013).

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Uddin, Islam, Alam, & Basher (2010) also mentioned in their study that widow did not have enough access to decision-making and control of financial aspects within their households.

Nesa, Haque & Siddique (2013) revealed that an overwhelming majority of the elderly widow did not have education and income and being economically dependent they had been living with their married children. As a result they did not have enough access to decision-making and control of financial aspects within their households (Dubey et al., 2011). They are often deprived of their rights, surviving in stark poverty, homelessness, neglect and remain largely uncared for healthcare facilities (Datta, 2012). In Bangladesh, the widow of rural areas lead measurable life not only because of their gender but also because of the socio-cultural customs and flaws in the legal system specially related to the inheritance of property (Islam, 2012).

In Bangladesh, the number of widow constitute about 14.7 percent of total married women (BBS, 2016), still in the eyes of society a widow is treated as burden and they do not have freedom of choice, stereotypical attitudes, lack of education and security concerns (Blumberg, 2005; Begum and Majumder, 2011). In rural areas, women are basically housewives and to them widowhood means losing the only breadwinner (Asraf and Yin, 2010). Additionally, women are considered economically unproductive individual and their role in rural areas is not recognized at all even after death of her husband (Stephen, 2009).

Though women have got good status as the voices for women empowerment raises high at national and international level, but still they are treated as a burden on the family which hinders their empowerment process (Rahaman, 2012). In case of aged women, empowerment not only depends on economic variables but also various socioeconomic determinants like age, person with whom they live, time of being widow etc. can empower a widow in parallel (Rao, 2011). In rural areas of Bangladesh, instead of being engaged in income generating activities directly, due to age and experience their decision making power in family directly or indirectly indicate empowerment (Jihad, 2012). Actually, empowerment of aged women depends highly on social and economic status of women which affect their decision making power both in public and private sphere (Puri, 2010). So, to identify the factors responsible for empowerment of widow in rural area this study focused on two specific objectives i.e. to analyze the factors determining empowerment of aged widow as well as examine the extent of influence of those determinants on women empowerment.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted following survey research design in order to meet the objectives. Furthermore, *Raingamari* village of *Jalma* union under *Batiaghata* Thana of Khulna District in Bangladesh was selected purposively in order to find out the socioeconomic condition of widow and extent of women empowerment. As the socioeconomic status of widow in *Raingamari* village seemed to represent the scenario of discrimination, oppression and marginalization that denoted lower status of women empowerment throughout their life cycle. According to BBS (2015), total households of this village were 1,587 and after collecting list of widow from *Jalma union parishad* during study time about 748 women were found as the list was prepared for selecting beneficiaries of 'widow allowance scheme'. But the specific criteria for selection of respondents were: they must be widow and their husbands had been passed away more than five years ago; must be aged group of 60 and above and did not have more than ten decimals of landed property in household. Following the mentioned criteria, a total population of 550 widows were identified through conducting household census. In this study, total 200 respondents were picked up using random sampling from the inventory list after completion of household census. A pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule, containing both

open and close ended questions, was used to collect the data from April to June 2016 focusing the following points: socio-demographic and economic condition, criteria of women empowerment *i.e.* control over household resources, social mobility, participation in income generating activities, participation in socio-cultural activities, participation in political activities, participation in household decision making process, participation in health decision, exposure to media and information sources, perception regarding rights of elderly women to calculate women empowerment index. To analyze the aim of this study statistical techniques including frequency and percentile distribution, measures of central tendency (Mean), measures of dispersion (Standard Deviation), Pearson’s chi-square test and Pearson’s correlation coefficient were used.

Women empowerment index (WEI): To construct composite women empowerment index (WEI), nine interrelated and mutually influential indices on women empowerment (Table 1), *e.g.* control over household resources, participation in household decision making process, participation in income generating activities, participation in socio-cultural activities, participation in political activities, participation in health decision, exposure to media and information sources, social mobility, perception regarding rights of elderly women, were measured by using likert-type questions with five possible response (Parveen and Leonhäuser, 2004; Mastey, 2009 and Poudel, 2015). Additionally, to calculate index for each domain, the scores for different sub-questions were added up and divided into three equal intervals, *i.e.* ‘High’, ‘Medium’, and ‘Low’. Later, detecting all the scores of different domains, the sum of the total responses were used to compose the women empowerment index (WEI).

Table 1: Women empowerment index (WEI)

Variables	Range		
	Low	Medium	High
Control over Household Resources	≤ 25	26-31	32≥
Participation in Household Decision Making Process	≤ 26	27-37	38≥
Participation in Income Generating Activities	≤ 21	22-32	33≥
Participation in Socio-Cultural Activities	≤ 19	20-28	29≥
Participation in Political Activities	≤ 15	16-25	26≥
Participation in Health Decision	≤ 18	19-22	23≥
Exposure to Media and Information Sources	≤ 15	16-20	21≥
Social Mobility	≤ 22	23-30	31 ≥
Perception Regarding Rights of Elderly Women	≤ 35	36-45	46≥
Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	≤ 220	221-265	266≥

Results

Socio-demographic status of the respondents: Table 2 represents the socio-demographic status of aged widow which demonstrates that most of the respondents (51 percent) belong to the age group of 61 to 70 years and the average age of the respondents is 69.36 years old. Here, the highest portion of the respondents (58.7 percent) belong to *Sanatan* religion whereas above 52 percent of the respondents are illiterate and only 9.5 percent widow had completed secondary and above level of education. In case of duration of being widow 52 percent aged women have become widow from 11 to 20 years and the average years of being widow is 16.45 years with standard deviation 8.58. Moreover, majority of the respondents (67.5 percent) are living with their sons, 13.5 percent widow are living alone, 12 percent respondents are living with their brothers and only 7 percent widow are living with their daughters.

Table 2: Socio-demographic status of the respondents

Socio-demographic variables	Percent	Mean & Standard Deviation
Age composition (in years)		
≤ 60	28(9.0%)	69.36 & 9.06
61-70	94(51.0%)	
71-80	45(24.5%)	
81 ≥	33(15.5%)	
Religious status		
Islam	82(41.3%)	-
Sanatan	118(58.7%)	
Year of schooling		
Illiterate	98(52.5%)	1.88 & 1.967
Primary level	67(38.0%)	
Secondary level and above	35(9.5%)	
Duration of being widow (in years)		
≤10	63(29.0%)	16.45 & 8.58
11-20	98(52.0%)	
21 ≥	39(19.0%)	
Living arrangement		
Alone	22(13.5%)	-
Son	138(67.5%)	
Daughter	19(7.0%)	
Brother	21(12.0%)	

Economic status of the respondents: Data in Table 3 demonstrates that the highest portion of the respondents (56.5 percent) are housewife while 21.5 percent respondents are working as day labor to earn their livelihood, 11.5 percent widow are working as domestic maid, more than 6 percent respondents are engaged with farming activities and only 4 percent widow are involved with petty business. Additionally, the average monthly income of the respondents is BDT 850.60 as major portion of the respondents (69.5 percent) do not have any monthly income. As most of the respondents do not have monthly income consequently the highest portion of the respondents (67 percent) do not have any monthly savings and the average monthly savings of the respondents is BDT 632.50. From this study it has also been found that more than 51 percent widow's household monthly income belonged to BDT 6,001 to 12,000 and only 16.5 percent respondent's monthly household monthly income level is BDT 12,001 and above. Moreover, the main earning member of the household is respondent's son (70.5 percent) and only 6 percent respondent's brother are the main earning member of the family. Furthermore, 54.5 percent widow had ≤ 4 decimals land while about 33 percent widow are landless. In response to both monetary wealth and non-monetary wealth most of the respondents reported (48.5 percent and 44 percent respectively) medium level of wealth. Additionally, majority of the respondents (61 percent) get financial assistance where as 64 percent respondents get old age allowance and the lowest portion of the respondents (7.5 percent) are getting freedom fighter allowance.

Table 3: Economic status of the respondents

Economic variables	Percent	Mean & Standard Deviation
Occupational status		
Housewife	129(56.5%)	
Day labor	33(21.5%)	
Domestic maid	20(11.5%)	-
Farming activities	10(6.5%)	
Petty business	8(4.0%)	
Monthly income (in BDT)		
No Income	139(69.5%)	
≤ 2500	35(17.5%)	850.60 & 1214.21
2501 ≥	26(13.0%)	
Monthly Savings (in BDT)		
No savings	128(67.0%)	
≤ 2500	60(27.5%)	632.50 & 3466.85
2501 ≥	12(5.5%)	
Total monthly household income (in BDT)		
≤ 6000	68(32.0%)	
6001-12000	103(51.5%)	8895.50 & 12813.36
12001 ≥	29(16.5%)	
Main earning member of household		
Self	29(14.5%)	
Son	141(70.5%)	-
Son in law	18(9.0%)	
Brother	12(6.0%)	
Amount of land (in decimal)		
Landless	67(32.5%)	
≤ 4	91(54.5%)	3.55 & 3.361
6 ≥	42(13.0%)	
Indices of monetary wealth		
Low(≤ 3)	86(42.5%)	
Medium(4-6)	97(48.5%)	-
High(7 ≥)	17(9.0%)	
Indices of non-monetary wealth		
Low(≤ 5)	39(18.0%)	
Medium(6-8)	85(44.0%)	-
High (9 ≥)	76(38.0%)	
Getting financial assistance		
No	78(39.0%)	-
Yes	122(61.0)	
Type of assistance		
Old age allowance	86(64.0%)	
Widow allowance	27(28.5%)	-
Freedom fighter allowance	09(7.5%)	

Widowhood and Empowerment

Socio-demographic status and women empowerment: Table 4 revealed that younger women are more empowered than the aged widow which is significant statistically ($\chi^2=7.866; p>0.047$) whereas women empowerment is hindered by lower level of educational status ($\chi^2=6.535; p>0.163$). It has also been found that widow from *Sanatan* religion are belonging a satisfactory position of women empowerment in contrast to women of Muslim community which is significant statistically. The study also reveals that the Pearson's χ^2 value ($p>0.250$) represents duration of being widow effects negatively on women empowerment whereas widow who are living with their sons holds medium level of women empowerment (75.8 percent) and above 74 percent widow, living with son, hold medium level of women empowerment which is statistically significant ($\chi^2=36.514; p<0.248$).

Table 4: Relationship between socio-demographic status and Women Empowerment (WEI)

Status of the respondents	Women Empowerment Index (WEI)				χ^2	p value
	Low	Medium	High	Total		
Age composition (in years)						
≤ 60	8(17.4%)	19(15.8%)	6(17.6%)	33(16.5%)	7.866	0.047**
61-70	18(39.1%)	54(45.0%)	20(8.8%)	92(46.0%)		
71-80	11(23.9%)	28(23.3%)	8(23.5%)	47(23.5%)		
81 ≥	9(19.6%)	19(15.8%)	0(0.0%)	28(14.0%)		
Year of schooling						
Illiterate	28(60.9%)	68(56.7%)	13(38.2%)	109(54.5%)	6.535	0.163
Primary level	10(21.7%)	22(18.3%)	12(35.3%)	44(22.0%)		
Secondary level and above	8(17.4%)	30(25.0%)	9(26.5%)	47(23.5%)		
Religious status						
Islam	17(37.0%)	58(48.3%)	24(70.6%)	99(49.5%)	9.009	0.011**
<i>Sanatan</i>	29(63.0%)	62(51.7%)	10(29.4%)	101(50.5%)		
Duration of being widow						
≤10	10(21.7%)	47(39.2%)	11(32.4%)	68(34.0%)	5.385	0.250
11-20	26(56.5%)	50(41.7%)	18(52.9%)	94(47.0%)		
21 ≥	10(21.7%)	23(19.2%)	5(14.7%)	38(19.0%)		
Living arrangement						
Alone	2(4.3%)	10(8.3%)	13(38.2%)	25(12.5%)	31.661	0.000***
Son	38(82.6%)	91(75.8%)	16(47.1%)	145(72.5%)		
Daughter	1(2.2%)	13(10.8%)	4(11.8%)	18(9.0%)		
Brother	5(10.9%)	6(5.0%)	1(2.9%)	12(6.0%)		

*** Significant level- 1% (2-tailed); ** Significant level- 5% (2-tailed); * Significant level- 10% (2-tailed)

Economic status and women empowerment: Table 5 indicates that occupation of respondent has positive relationship with women empowerment which is statistically significant ($\chi^2=57.487; p<0.000$). Moreover, women having monthly income and monthly savings hold medium level of women empowerment which are significant statistically ($\chi^2=35.572; p<0.000$ and $\chi^2=10.396; p<0.000$ respectively). Additionally, in case of total household income the Pearson's χ^2 value ($p>0.301$) represents that household monthly income has no impact on women's empowerment. The study also concludes that amount of land has positive relation with women empowerment that is significant

statistically ($\chi^2=14.151$; $p<0.007$). At last, woman who had moderate monetary wealth and non-monetary wealth are holding medium level of women empowerment ($p<0.000$ and $p<0.000$ respectively). Finally, the study exposes positive relationship between getting financial assistance with women empowerment which is significant statistically ($\chi^2=26.812$; $p<0.000$).

Table 5: Relationship between economic status and Women Empowerment (WEI)

Status of the respondents	Women Empowerment Index (WEI)				χ^2	p value
	Low	Medium	High	Total		
Occupation of the respondent						
Housewife	41(89.1%)	88(73.3%)	10(29.4%)	139(69.5%)	57.487	0.000***
Day labor	5(10.9%)	6(5.0%)	12(35.3%)	23(11.5%)		
Domestic maid	0(0.0%)	8(6.7%)	9(26.5%)	17(8.5%)		
Farming activities	0(0.0%)	12(10.0%)	1(2.9%)	13(6.5%)		
Petty business	0(0.0%)	6(5.0%)	2(5.9%)	8(4.0%)		
Monthly income of the respondents (in BDT)						
No income	4(8.7%)	17(14.2%)	14(41.2%)	35(17.5%)	35.572	0.000***
≤ 2500	41(89.1%)	88(73.3%)	10(29.4%)	139(69.5%)		
2501≥	1(2.2%)	15(12.5%)	10(29.4%)	26(13.0%)		
Monthly savings (in BDT)						
No savings	5(10.9%)	36(30.0%)	10(29.4%)	51(25.5%)	10.396	0.034**
≤ 2500	38(82.6%)	80(66.7%)	20(58.8%)	138(69.0%)		
2501≥	3(6.5%)	4(3.3%)	4(11.8%)	11(5.5%)		
Main earning member of household						
Self	2(4.3%)	12(10.0%)	15(44.1%)	29(14.5%)	36.514	0.000***
Son	38(82.6%)	89(74.2%)	14(41.2%)	141(70.5%)		
Son in law	1(2.2%)	13(10.8%)	4(11.8%)	18(9.0%)		
Brother	5(10.9%)	6(5.0%)	1(2.9%)	12(6.0%)		
Total monthly household income (in BDT)						
≤ 6000	14(30.4%)	41(34.2%)	17(50.0%)	72(36.0%)	4.873	0.301
6001-12000	24(52.2%)	64(53.3%)	15(44.1%)	103(51.5%)		
12001 ≥	8(17.4%)	15(12.5%)	2(5.9%)	25(12.5%)		
Amount of land (in decimal)						
Landless	12(26.1%)	28(23.3%)	189(52.9%)	58(29.0%)	14.151	0.007**
≤ 5	16(34.8%)	50(41.7%)	12(35.3%)	78(39.0%)		
6 ≥	18(39.1%)	42(35.0%)	4(11.8%)	64(32.0%)		
Monetary wealth						
Low	18(39.1%)	39(32.5%)	30(88.2%)	87(43.5%)	34.666	0.000***
Medium	25(54.3%)	68(56.7%)	4(11.8%)	97(48.5%)		
High	3(6.5%)	13(10.8%)	0(0.0%)	16(8.0%)		
Non-monetary wealth						
Low	8(17.4%)	12(10.0%)	12(35.3%)	32(16.0%)	12.776	0.000***
Medium	22(47.8%)	60(50.0%)	12(35.3%)	94(47.0%)		
High	16(34.8%)	48(40.0%)	10(29.4%)	74(37.0%)		
Getting financial assistance						
No	33 (40.2%)	39 (47.6%)	10 (12.2%)	33 (40.2%)	26.812	0.000***
Yes	12 (10.2%)	73 (61.9%)	33 (28.0%)	12 (10.2%)		

*** Significant level- 1% (2-tailed); ** Significant level- 5% (2-tailed); * Significant level- 10% (2-tailed)

Correlation between WEI and its covariates: Data in Table 6 discloses the correlation between women empowerment index and socio-demographic and economic status of the widow. It has been found from the study that lower the age higher the women empowerment, while lower the religious conservativeness ensures higher empowerment. Additionally, employment opportunity for widow also determines higher scope for empowerment of widow. Furthermore, higher income of the widow safeguards empowerment which is also proved in case of savings. Moreover, if the widow live alone she faces various problems like economic, social etc. which hinders her scope of empowerment. Consequently, higher number of earning member of family confirms economic solvency which paves the way for widow empowerment. Besides, higher amount of land approves higher empowerment for widow. In case of monetary and non-monetary wealth the study proves that higher control on these two types of wealth ensures higher women empowerment. At last, higher opportunity for financial assistance approves women empowerment rather than who are not getting any type of financial assistance.

Table 6: Correlation between Women Empowerment Index and Its Covariates

Independent Variables	Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	
	Pearson Correlation (r)	p value
Age composition	-0.128**	0.035
Religious status	-0.206***	0.002
Occupation of the respondent	0.308**	0.000
Monthly income of the respondent (in BDT)	0.246***	0.000
Monthly savings (in BDT)	0.155**	0.029
Living arrangement	-0.178**	0.012
Main earning member of household	0.130***	0.001
Amount of land (in decimal)	0.200**	0.005
Monetary wealth	0.245**	0.000
Non-monetary wealth	0.085***	0.000
Getting financial assistance	0.246***	0.000

*** Significant level- 1% (2-tailed); ** Significant level- 5% (2-tailed); * Significant level- 10% (2-tailed)

Discussion

Younger wives in Bangladesh are kept under strict control of their family members as compared to elder wives that restricts their freedom of movement as well as confines their freedom of choices (Sathar&Kazi,2000). Elder women generally have greater involvement in decision making within family than the younger women. However, younger women also begin to participate in decision making in their elder age(Teferi & Garoma, 2014). The study also found significant relation with age and women empowerment in *Raingamari* village as with the growth of age a woman's experience, skill, knowledge and capacity decreases due to physical, mental and situational condition that hinders the decisions making power of households.

Mason and Herbert (2013) stated that religion itself in becoming a contradictory issue which can be the source of both comfort and conflict for women. All religions can empower women, and all have empowered women at various times. The finding of the study explicit that above 58 percent widow who were the believers of *Sanatan* had medium level of women empowerment in comparison to their counterparts. So, the study demonstrated that Muslim women were reluctant to come out from religious thoughts and beliefs rather than women from *Sanatan* religion.

In rural Bangladesh educational attainment helps the women to be empowered by building money earning capability among them, developing confidence to face challenges, enhancing

ability to make decisions regarding themselves and their intimates (Parveen, 2005). From the study it has been found that majority of the respondents (52.5 percent) were illiterate which became a barrier to women empowerment of aged widow. Here, it had also been revealed that except educational attainment widow could not step forward to women empowerment.

From this study it has been also found that the average years of being widow was 16.45 years and duration of being widow has no relation with women empowerment which is significant statistically ($\chi^2=5.385; p>0.250$). The person with whom a widow live is a determinant of women empowerment as the prevailing traditional, cultural restrictions on women are practiced by the family members. Majority of the respondents (67.5 percent) had been living with their sons were holding medium level of women empowerment and the result is significant statistically ($\chi^2=31.6615; p<0.000$).

In case of occupation the study exposes that most of the respondents (56.5 percent) were housewife and only 4 percent widow were involved with petty business. The significant relationship between occupation and empowerment ($\chi^2=57.487; p<0.000$) had also been found in this study. Women's economic dependence was the main reason of their powerlessness and it was assumed that economically productive women can improve their position in various aspects of life (Zaman, Rahman, Hussain, & Zaki, 2008). The study found similarities with Chandra (2005) that occupational status lessen their economic dependency, provide more control over resources, and enhance their participation in decision making as well as their mobility.

The study also represented that as the majority of the respondents (69.5 percent) had no income but 27.5 respondents had monthly income level BDT \leq 2,500 were holding medium level of women empowerment rather than who have no income. In case of savings, it had also been observed that respondents having monthly savings BDT \leq 2,500 had medium level of empowerment which is significant statistically ($\chi^2=10.396; p<0.034$). In rural areas of Bangladesh women comprise nearly half of the total population as well as female 'empowerment' has increasingly become a policy goal, both as an end to itself and as a means to achieving other development goals. Access to women empowerment requires commitment to savings that lead to an increase in female decision-making power within the household.

Bangladesh, being a male dominated society, it is very common that male member of household will be the household head or main earning member and women will be confined in the four walls of the house and performs household chores (Akhter, Kun, Chukwunonso, & Weisen, 2018). The study also revealed that 67.5 percent respondents were living with their sons who were the main decision maker of the family. Furthermore, regarding main earning member of family most of the respondents (70.5 percent) responded son as the main earning member of family but the total household income of the family has no relation with empowerment of widow which was statistically significant.

Landesa (2012) mentioned that land is typically the most important asset for people in the developing world, the majority of whom depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, women in the developing world are constrained in their ability to own, control, and access land. Women's access to and control over land can potentially lead to gender equality with women empowerment alongside addressing material deprivation. Land is not just a productive asset and a source of material wealth, but equally a source of security, status and recognition. The study illustrated that the highest portion of the respondents (56.7 percent), holding land \leq 4 decimals, could enjoy medium level of empowerment which is significant statistically. Likewise the above statement, the study further recognized that land had become a medium of women empowerment because little amount of land might widen decision making power of widow.

Household assets prevents widow form insecure situation as the study found that approximately 48.5 percent and 44 percent of total respondents had moderate monetary wealth and non-monetary wealth respectively. Majority of the respondents (56.7 percent) who had medium level of monetary wealth were enjoying medium level of empowerment. Additionally, non-monetary wealth was also significant in case of women empowerment ($\chi^2=12.776; p<0.000$) which is significant statistically. Finally, most of the respondents (61 percent) had been getting financial assistance. Among them, highest portion of the respondents (64 percent) were receiving old age allowance scheme. Furthermore, getting any type of financial assistance had relationship with widow empowerment which is also significant statistically ($\chi^2=26.812; p <0.000$).

In case of correlation between women empowerment and its covariates, the study demonstrated that lower age ensured higher empowerment of widow ($p<0.035$). The involvement in occupation had been broadening the empowerment status of aged widow as well as income and savings had positive correlation with women empowerment as income ensured life security and savings safeguards the future. Furthermore, living arrangement of widow is negatively correlated with empowerment as if the widow lived alone there lessened the chanced of empowerment. Moreover, higher household assets (both monetary and non-monetary wealth) widens the scope for empowerment of widow. Additionally, financial assistance like old age allowance, widow allowance and freedom fighter allowance extended the possibility of empowerment of widow.

Conclusion

As a concluding note, it may be pointed up that women empowerment is becoming increasingly an important apparatus to uplift the socioeconomic condition of aged widow, especially those whose livelihoods are bracketed together poverty. The study extensively displayed that in the selected study the number of widow from *Sanatan* religion was high but year of schooling of whole respondents was not noteworthy. It had also showed a comparative picture regarding the stipulation of widow in the different dimensions of empowerment to determine influencing factors of their empowerment. Furthermore, religious status, income and savings, person with whom the respondent lived, main earning member of family, amount of land, monetary wealth and non-monetary wealth and getting financial support were positively related with empowerment of widow, while age, educational status, total household income and duration of being widow cannot influence much on women empowerment. However, from the findings of the study it appears that in our society widow especially aged women cannot take decision, move willingly, having no income and savings, do not get health care facilities, cannot participate in socio-cultural activities etc. due to age, educational qualification, lack of controlling power etc. which hinders the women empowerment.

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